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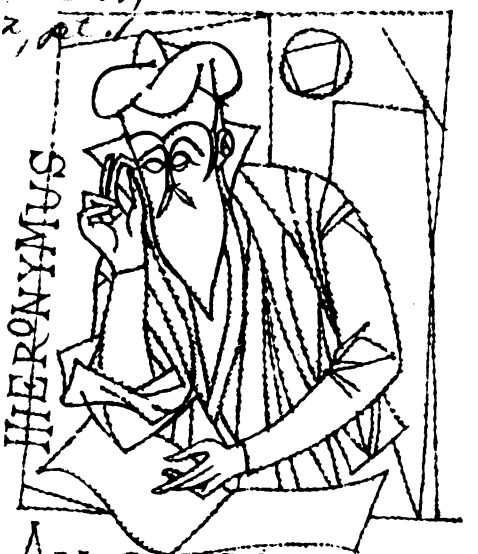

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MEDITATIONS

ON THE

Life and Mysteries of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

VOLUME II.

THE PUBLIC LIFE

PART I.

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MEDITATIONS

ON THE

PUBLIC LIFE

OF

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

FROM THE FRENCH

BY THE COMPILER OF THE TREASURY OF DEVOTION

EDITED BY THE

REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A.
RECTOR OF CLEWER, BERKS; HONORARY CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

PART I.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

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VOL. II.—PART I.

MEDITATIONS

ON THE

Public Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

ACTS OF DEVOTION

BEFORE AND AFTER A MEDITATION

Preparatory Prayer

GRANT, O GOD, that during this meditation all the thoughts of my mind, all the affections of my heart, and every power of my soul, may tend wholly and entirely to Thy service, and to the glory of Thy divine majesty.

Come, HOLY GHOST, and fill the hearts of Thy faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

℣. Send forth Thy SPIRIT, and they shall be made.

℟. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Collect

GOD, Who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of Thy

HOLY SPIRIT; Grant us by the same SPIRIT to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through the merits of CHRIST JESUS our SAVIOUR, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the Unity of the same SPIRIT, One GOD, world without end. Amen.

Offering the Resolution

I OFFER to Thee, O my GOD, these resolutions; I cannot keep them faithfully unless Thou dost vouchsafe to bless them; but I trust of Thy goodness to gain that blessing which I ask for, in the Name and through the merits of JESUS CHRIST my SAVIOUR.

Self-Examination on the Meditation

I. Have I prepared my meditation with care, settled on the preludes, and been careful about the points?

II. Have I recalled the subject of the meditation before going to sleep?

III. Has my mind been intent on the exclusion of every other thought when I have awoke during the night, or while dressing during the morning?

IV. Before the meditation have I lifted up my heart to GOD for a few moments as though He were especially present?

V. During the meditation have I been careful to observe a reverent and suitable posture?

VI. Have I shortened the time of my meditation without necessary cause?

VII. Have I kept my mind intent on the subject of my meditation, and exercised my affections upon it?

VIII. Have I made the colloquies?

IX. Have I carried away some practical resolutions?

Prayer of St. Ignatius

RECEIVE, O LORD, the offering which I now make to Thee of my whole being; accept my memory, my understanding, and my will. Whatsoever I have or possess Thou LORD hast of Thy goodness bestowed upon me; all this I freely give back to Thee, to be disposed of absolutely according to Thy will. Grant me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich indeed; I ask of Thee nothing more.

Anima Christi

Soul of CHRIST, sanctify me!

Body of CHRIST, save me!

Blood of CHRIST, inebriate me!

Water from the side of CHRIST, wash me!

Passion of CHRIST, strengthen me!

O Good JESU, hear me!

Within Thy wounds hide me!

Suffer me not to be separated from Thee!

From the malicious enemy defend me!

In the hour of my death, call me!

And bid me come to Thee,

That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,

For ever and ever.

Amen.

I Meditation

THE PREACHING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

"The word of GOD came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." *St. Luke* iii. 2, 3.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the desert of Judæa round about Jordan where John was baptizing.

2 **Prelude**—Grant, O GOD, that I may not be like those who harden their hearts against the warnings of Thy messengers.

I **Point**—What was the state of heart of those who listened to the Baptist?

St. John the Baptist announced to the world the greatest of all tidings, that of its approaching redemption; he exhorted people to prepare themselves by repentance for this inestimable benefit. How were these warnings received? We can divide the hearers of the Baptist into four classes: that of the hypocrite, that of the indifferent, that of the inconstant, and that of the infidel. The hypocrite, governed by pride, belonged for the most part to the sect of the Pharisees; they only came to listen to the preaching of the Baptist in order that they might not displease the people, whose esteem St. John had gained, and when

they went away they were even more hardened in sin than before they came to hear him. The indifferent heard the Baptist, but did not bring forth any fruit, on account of their being apathetic and preoccupied, a disposition which rendered them blameworthy, because it was within their power to overcome their sloth and listlessness. The inconstant listened, and their hearts were touched, but when temptation came they forgot their good resolutions, because they neglected the only two means of persevering, namely, watchfulness and prayer. The faithful were sinners who were truly converted and fervent in spirit; they profited by the warnings of the Baptist, and prepared themselves to receive blessings at the hands of their LORD. If I had lived in those days, to which of those four classes should I have belonged, or rather to which do I belong? For even now the messengers of GOD are sent to prepare us for our LORD'S coming.

II Point—What was the nature of the repentance which St. John the Baptist preached?

In what does that repentance consist? The Baptist tells us himself when he says: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth."[1] We must then fill the valleys, which represent the depth of our miseries, by the tears which we ought to shed over our sins, by our acts of amendment on account of our past sins, and by the holy desires which raise our souls to GOD. Every mountain and hill of pride must be brought low. The crooked ways, the tortuous paths of a doubting conscience, of a divided intention, must be made straight; and we must be rid of all those inconsistencies of character and temper, which, like so many roughnesses, stones, and thorns, make the access to our hearts

[1] St. Luke iii. 5.

difficult and painful. In a word, we must undertake the entire reformation of ourselves. This is a great work; it requires courage, for it presupposes painful and protracted labour; but if the difficulties which attend it make us afraid, let us look at the reward which will crown our labours; and this is the abundance of grace which our divine Redeemer came to bestow upon us, in giving us a more intimate knowledge of Himself, and more abundant gifts of His love, according to those words of the Baptist: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of GOD."[1]

Colloquy—Thank GOD the FATHER for all that He did to prepare the way of His SON, and for His love in manifesting Him to the world. Pray JESUS CHRIST to dispose your heart to receive the divine lessons which He will give you, and the blessings which He desires to heap upon you. Promise Him that you will not neglect to do anything on your part that can help you to seek that repentance, and to do those good works which are the subject of the Baptist's teaching.

Resolution—I will strive against my besetting sin, and offer to GOD the pain and the difficulty of the combat.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." *St. Matth.* iii. 2.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] St. Luke. iii. 6.

II Contemplation

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"Then cometh JESUS from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. . . . And JESUS, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the SPIRIT of GOD descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." *St. Matth.* iii. 13-17.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the desert of Judæa, and the river Jordan, where JESUS was baptized.

3 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, purify my soul, I pray Thee, and apply to it the fruits of that great mystery on which I am about to meditate.

I **Point**—Consider the persons.

JESUS, Who presents Himself for baptism, is our GOD, our SAVIOUR, our Master, and our Model. All in Him breathes of humility, modesty, and sweetness. He is full of zeal for the work which He is about to undertake. Let us now look at St. John the Baptist; a camel's skin serves him for clothing; he is humble, gentle and modest. What respect does he not show to JESUS! It is because he knows Him by means of a supernatural light. The people are assembled in groups on the banks of the Jordan. Some are contrite, others are indifferent, while others observe all that passes with curiosity.

II **Point**—Listen to the words.

JESUS asks for baptism; the Baptist excuses himself: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me." "Suffer it to be so now," said JESUS: "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."[1] What, then, O my divine Master, is it right that Thou, Who art holiness itself, shouldest consort with sinners? Yes, it is right, for Thou, O my LORD JESUS, wert a Victim upon the Cross for sin. But do I fulfil this righteousness when I flee from humiliation? JESUS has received baptism. His FATHER bears Him this testimony: "This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." O Holy FATHER, what a Master hast Thou given unto men!

III Point—Consider the actions.

The act of asking for baptism was the first step which JESUS took in His public life: it is worthy of One Who was the Master of humility. This humility, which also fills the heart of the Baptist, produces a kind of combat between the Master and the disciple, who out of obedience gave way to his Master. JESUS was baptized. His divine FATHER bore Him a glorious testimony, in which the adorable Trinity fully manifested Itself.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Author of all sanctity, Who has deigned to make Himself our Pattern. Ask Him to make you understand the mysteries of humility and love which He showed you in His baptism. Ask Him for grace to fulfil all righteousness as He did by doing His FATHER'S will. Humble yourself for your past conduct. Promise to perform new acts of self-renunciation and faithfulness. Pray, in particular, for all the graces necessary for this.

Resolution—I will be humble and show my gratitude to GOD.

Offer the Resolution.

[1] St. Matth. iii. 15.

Spiritual Reflection—"Thou art My beloved SON." *St. Mark* i. 11.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

III Meditation

JESUS THE BELOVED SON OF THE FATHER

"This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." *St. Matth.* iii. 17.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the river Jordan, where JESUS was baptized; its banks are covered with people.

2 **Prelude**—Show me, O GOD, the depths of that love of Thine which has caused Thee to give Thy well-beloved SON to die for mankind, and the excessive beauty of that SON, Who alone is worthy of my love. "Holy FATHER, . . . this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent."[1]

I Point—JESUS, the well-beloved SON of the FATHER, is given to us.

"Thou art My beloved SON, in Thee I am well pleased."[2] This is the testimony which GOD the FATHER bears to His SON at the moment when He is about to manifest Him to the world. GOD the FATHER wills that we should understand how great is this inestimable gift that He has given us. How precious is this gift of His infinite love! He does not send us an angel, or a prince of His court, to instruct us and to save us: it is His

[1] St. John xvii. 1-3. [2] St. Luke iii. 22.

well-beloved SON, in Whom He is well pleased. How worthy is our adorable Master of our regard, of our veneration, of our obedience, and of our love! He Who has come from the FATHER, Who is the MESSIAH, Who was so much desired and so desirable in Himself, this Master of truth, this Source of all grace, this new Adam, Who comes so graciously to repair the sin of the first Adam! Am I sufficiently filled with lively gratitude towards this heavenly FATHER, with highest esteem and most profound veneration towards this WORD made Man, this SON of His love; have I a teachable spirit, and am I well disposed towards a Master Who, on account of the many titles that are given Him, has a right to expect this of me?

II Point—JESUS, the well-beloved SON of the FATHER, is worthy of all our love.

GOD the FATHER has given us His SON; JESUS gives Himself to us: what object is so worthy to fill our hearts? What does He do to gain our hearts? He is, in the words of the Psalmist, "fairer than the children of men; full of grace are Thy lips, because GOD hath blessed Thee for ever."[1] He is in Himself full of attraction for us, and His words are full of grace and persuasion. If gifts of mind and heart should have more power to attract us, JESUS possesses these: "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:"[2] "He is meek and lowly in heart:"[3] "He has loved us with an everlasting love:"[4] with the most generous love; for, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends:"[5] with a communicative love; for He said, "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled."[6] Consider too all the attributes of His Godhead: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:"[7] Consider too His

[1] Psalm xlv. 3.
[2] Coloss. ii. 3.
[3] St. Matth. xi. 29.
[4] Jer. xxxi. 3.
[5] St. John xv. 13.
[6] St. Luke xii. 49.
[7] Coloss. ii. 9.

titles of SAVIOUR, FATHER, Physician, Defender, King, Master, Brother, Friend, Spouse, and many others which He deigned to take for our sake. Is it not true that He can claim from us a love infinitely greater than any of which our hearts are capable? Let us strive then to consider all this in our inmost hearts. Let us pray our LORD to pour His love into our hearts, that it may fill our whole being, so that in meditating on Him at one time as a Teacher and Legislator, at another time as our Pattern, at another time as our Benefactor, Friend, and Father, we may be disposed through the love that we have for Him to listen to Him, to imitate Him, and to serve Him faithfully.

Colloquy—Adore GOD the FATHER, and thank Him for His inestimable gift in having sent His SON into the world. Bless and praise GOD the SON for having given Himself to us. Pray Him to fill us with His love. Humble yourself, and tell Him how you grieve over those obstacles which His love has found in you. Beseech Him to triumph over your hearts by His grace, and to make Himself Master of them for time and for eternity.

Resolution—I will think from time to time of the titles which JESUS CHRIST has assumed, and pray Him to fill me with His holy love.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Thou art My Beloved SON, in Thee I am well pleased." *St. Luke* iii. 22.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

IV Meditation

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"Then was JESUS led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." *St. Matth.* iv. 1.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the desert of Judæa, to which JESUS withdrew.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O my SAVIOUR, to gain spiritual strength in temptation, by faithfully using those means for resisting it which Thy example points out to me.

I **Point**—The temptation of JESUS CHRIST encourages us. Why did our divine Master allow the evil spirit to dare to approach Him and tempt Him? It was because, having taken upon Himself our flesh out of love for us, He willed to submit Himself to all the miseries of our nature, except sin. He knew how humiliating and painful temptation was. He willed to submit to it, in order that those who should feel its attacks should not be discouraged, but should have recourse to Him with entire confidence. He overcame Satan in our nature, that our nature might be endued with a like power, and strength might be thus communicated to His own elect. He desires also to teach us that temptation does not hurt those who resist it, but, on the contrary, if resisted, strengthens them in virtue. Lastly, He would by His own conduct give us an example of what we ought to do in temptation. With what gratitude ought not this great goodness to inspire me.

II Point—The temptation of JESUS CHRIST is instructive to us.

How did JESUS, our divine Pattern, prepare Himself to meet temptation? How did He resist it? He prepared Himself by prayer and fasting, and withdrawing Himself from the world, or going into a retreat. An unmortified soul, and one who gives itself up to distractions, and is neglectful of prayer, is but ill prepared to sustain the assaults of the enemy. But consider the manner in which Satan attacked our LORD; he commenced indirectly, as his wont is with those who are leading recollected lives: "If Thou be the SON of GOD," he said, "command that these stones be made bread."[1] But JESUS only answers him with these words: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD."[2] Thus we ought to repulse even the shadow of evil by a firm resistance to its first attacks. The tempter changes his mode of attack; he takes our divine Master up to a pinnacle of the temple, and says to Him: "If Thou be the SON of GOD, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."[3] The first temptation was that of the lust of the flesh to sensuality, the next was addressed to pride. The enemy of all good is not ignorant that this evil inclination still exists in those souls who are not the slaves of sensual pleasures. JESUS again disconcerts him by His answer: "Thou shalt not tempt the LORD Thy GOD:"[4] teaching us that humility is the only means of preserving the gifts of GOD, and of making ourselves worthy of His help. The third and last temptation was to covetousness. Satan takes our LORD up into "an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory

[1] St. Matth. iv. 3. [2] St. Matth. iv. 4. [3] St. Matth. iv. 6.
[4] St. Matth. iv. 7.

of them:" he is not ashamed to propose to the SON of GOD to adore him, at the same time promising Him the possession of all these things. What an impostor! he has nothing to give, and yet he promises all. JESUS rejects this third proposition with horror: "Get thee hence, Satan," He said: "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve."[1] Then the devil, being vanquished, left Him, and angels came and ministered to our divine Master. Thus, when we come victorious out of a temptation, it is always followed by a visit of angels, by the coming to us of Him too Who is the King of angels, and with abundance of grace. How advantageous is it, then, to resist the attacks of the enemy! With what care ought I not to use all watchfulness and prayer, that I may come forth victorious from every assault!

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the King of all saints, Who is infinitely opposed to all sin, and incapable of yielding to it. Thank Him for being willing for your sake to submit to temptation. Humble yourself for having taken so little care to combat it after His example. Promise to neglect nothing in order to do so, and pray for the needful graces.

Resolution—I will fight against temptations with courage and confidence in the presence of JESUS CHRIST.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." *St. Matth.* xxvi. 41.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] St. Matth. iv. 10.

V Meditation

JESUS TOO LITTLE KNOWN BY HIS OWN

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. . . . But there standeth One among you Whom ye know not." *St. John* i. 19-26.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the bank of the Jordan opposite to the desert of Judæa.

2 **Prelude**—O my divine Master, manifest Thyself, I beseech Thee, to me; make me to know Thee, that Thy love may kindle within me, and that I may derive from Thee, the blessings which Thou hast to bestow upon me.

I **Point**—JESUS is little known by men.

"There standeth One among you Whom ye know not." This divine yet unknown Person Whom John the Baptist points out is the eternal WORD, "The Light of the world:"[1] Who has come down from heaven to point out to us the way thither. When this great Teacher of truth appeared, the chiefs of the nation hardened their hearts against Him, verifying by their conduct those words of His: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his deeds should be reproved."[2] This deplorable blindness still exists in our days. What multitudes are there now upon earth who know not JESUS CHRIST! He is in the midst of us, dwelling in His church, which represents Him, which instructs us in His doctrine,

[1] St. John i. 9.

[2] St. John iii. 20.

which gives us His sacraments; He is with us in the Holy Eucharist, where we can receive Him, by which He dwells in us and we in Him; and yet how few know Him! Do we not see that saying of the beloved disciple verified in our own days: "He was in the world, . . . and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not?"[1] We at least have the blessed privilege of knowing Him; we know that "He is the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD."[2] Let us strive to overcome so much indifference, let us labour to spread the knowledge of Him and of His love for us; we shall receive as the reward of our zeal such knowledge of Himself as JESUS communicates to His true friends; He promised it when He said: "Give, and it shall be given unto you."[3]

II Point—JESUS is little known even among those who profess to serve Him.

The knowledge of JESUS is not only the first step in the matter of our salvation, it is also the foundation and the chief principle of all perfection. By it the saints were drawn onward to advance in the interior life; for that life is no other than the knowledge of JESUS, and union with Him through conformity of affections, feelings, will and good works. This is why our divine SAVIOUR said: "Holy FATHER, . . . this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent."[4] How worthy is this interior and practical knowledge of JESUS CHRIST that we should acquire it! It is the hidden treasure of the gospel which is worth purchasing at the price of every sacrifice; it is the precious pearl in order to obtain which the wise merchantman gives up every other good. But who believes it? The inestimable treasure lies at our door, and we neglect it! "There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not." This good

[1] St. John i. 10, 11. [2] St. Matth. xvi. 16. [3] St. Luke vi. 38.
[4] St. John xvii. 1-3.

Master is in the midst of us by His sanctifying grace which gives us life in Him; by His SPIRIT, Whose light and Whose lessons move us to imitate Him; by the Holy Communion, which if it does not find within us any obstacle to the blessings which it will bestow upon us, will unite us and conform us to the pattern of our divine Master in a manner so perfect, that our spirit will be filled with His thoughts, our heart will be the dwelling-place of His affections, our mind and will will be identified with His mind and will, so that we can say with St. Paul: "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me."[1] JESUS is in the midst of us, what does He require of us that we may know Him? Shall I not strive to be more entirely and persistently faithful to Him?

Colloquy—Thank your divine SAVIOUR for having multiplied His miracles of power by coming among us through His Incarnation, by coming to dwell within us by the means of the Holy Eucharist. Pray for those who will not know Him. Humble yourself before Him because you know Him so little, considering the many gifts of grace which He has bestowed upon you. And with regard to all this, make Him all the promises and ask of Him all that your heart suggests to you.

Resolution—I will practise recollectedness, thinking often of JESUS, and constantly asking Him to give me His grace that I may know Him well. I will be faithful in practising those acts of virtue to which His SPIRIT draws me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"There standeth One among you Whom ye know not." *St. John* i. 26.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

VI Meditation

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD

"John seeth JESUS coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of the world." *St. John* i. 29.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the bank of the Jordan opposite to the desert of Judæa.

2 Prelude—O Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of the world, deign to make me experience the effects of Thy goodness in applying to me the fruits of Thy sacrifice.

I Point—JESUS is a Lamb by reason of His meekness and goodness.

The prophets foretold that meekness would be one of the principal characteristics of the MESSIAH. Isaiah had said of Him: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street, a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."[1] These prophecies had their perfect fulfilment in Him: "JESUS went about doing good."[2] He assuredly proved by His actions even more than by His words that mercy is better than sacrifice.[3] And when the Pharisees indignantly reproached Him for eating with publicans and sinners, He made this answer, worthy of all the tenderness of His heart: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."[4] Such is the character of JESUS, the meek Lamb destined to be the great Sacrifice which

[1] Isaiah xlii. 2, 3.
[2] Acts x. 38.
[3] St. Matth. ix. 13.
[4] St. Matth. ix. 12.

should reconcile heaven and earth. This meekness appears above all in His Passion. Then it was, that, not content with keeping silence, "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."[1] He then carried meekness to such an extent as to pray for His very enemies in the midst of His sufferings. How ought the goodness of JESUS to increase my confidence? above all, how ought it not to animate the exercise of charity towards those with whom I live, and all with whom I have to do?

II Point—JESUS, the Lamb of GOD, is the Victim Whose precious Blood cleanses us from all sin.

"Behold the Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of the world." JESUS alone could satisfy for us the justice of His FATHER. He has made perfect satisfaction, and His Blood has been shed to wash away every kind of sin: it was in view of the inestimable value of this precious Blood that GOD the FATHER said by the mouth of His prophet: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our GOD, for He will abundantly pardon."[2] And, not content with forgetting our sins, "He will cast them all into the depths of the sea."[3] "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[4] How infinite are the merits of the Blood of JESUS! O JESUS, divine Lamb, Thou Who wert made a victim for me, how is it that I have not a horror of sin, since it has caused Thy death?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the true Lamb of GOD, the only Victim that could take away the sins of the world. Bless Him with all the gratitude you can for His sacrifice of Himself, so full of suffering to Him, but so

[1] Isa. liii. 7. [2] Isa. lv. 7. [3] Micah vii. 19. [4] Isa. i. 18.

full of profit to you. Beseech Him to apply to you its fruits, and to help you in your turn to remove from your heart every obstacle which prevents grace from reigning there.

Resolution—I will sacrifice to JESUS CHRIST all that prevents my doing my duty towards GOD.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O Lamb of GOD, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

VII Contemplation

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of JESUS was there: and both JESUS was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of JESUS saith unto Him, They have no wine. . . . And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. JESUS saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. . . . When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine." *St. John* ii. 1-9.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the room where the feast was held.

3 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, deign, I beseech Thee, to give me grace in proportion to my needs.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider JESUS, full of love: He does not in His goodness disdain to take part in the innocent joy of the newly-married pair and their guests. Consider, too, that the blessed Mother was there, in her great humility and perfect purity. Consider, too, the guests who enjoy the feast, without passing in any way the bounds of moderation. The bride and bridegroom do the honours of the feast; they appear suddenly embarrassed, for the supply of wine is running short.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Neither the bride nor the bridegroom, nor the ruler of the feast, knows what to do when the supply of wine fails; but the Blessed Virgin says to her divine SON, "They have no wine." She does not say one word more, persuaded that JESUS understands and compassionates the embarrassment of the bride and bridegroom, as she does herself. JESUS hears her petition, though she only asked it indirectly; He appears at first to reject her request, desiring thereby to teach us an important lesson. He said: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Mary, too well grounded in humility and too full of faith in her divine SON to be discouraged by this answer, said to the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Let us attend to these words of the blessed Mother, for they are written also for us. Then JESUS said unto the servants: "Fill the water-pots with water." They obeyed, and "filled them up to the brim." And He said unto them: "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it." Listen to the words in which the governor expressed his astonishment, and then the conversation of those

who witnessed this miracle, in which the divinity of JESUS CHRIST so strikingly appeared.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Master of miracles. Thank Him for thus commencing to manifest Himself to His disciples. Entreat Him to manifest Himself to our hearts also by the miracles of His grace. Show Him all the wants of your soul in the matter of charity and all other virtues. Humbly acknowledge that you are unworthy to obtain grace from Him, and still pray Him to grant it you.

Resolution—I will often beseech JESUS to work in me those changes in my soul which He knows to be necessary.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, Refuge of sinners, have mercy upon me.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

VIII Meditation

THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

"As JESUS walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And JESUS said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him. And when He had gone a little farther thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him." *St. Mark* i. 16-20.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me, O GOD, to know how precious is the grace of my vocation, so that I may respond to it by gratitude and love.

I **Point**—JESUS first calls us.

It is not said in the gospel that those who were first admitted to be the disciples of JESUS had requested that favour of Him, nor had made themselves worthy of receiving it by doing any important service. It was their divine Master Who first called them. Thus does He deal with all men. It is taught us, as of faith, that no one is worthy of the first grace which is necessary to unite us to JESUS CHRIST. This adorable Master must prevent us with His grace. What goodness! Have I ever seriously reflected upon this? It is JESUS Who has prevented me with His grace in calling me into His service; He has chosen me and adopted me. The waters of holy baptism made me His child before I was able either to desire or to appreciate that sacred title. [He has also called me to the religious life, and betrothed me to Himself, for no merit of my own, and though I have so little love for Him.] What gratitude do I not owe Him for such great favours! Can I be insensible to them? Should I not cry out with the apostle: "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST."[1] Should I not repeat with the royal prophet: "I will alway give thanks unto the LORD: His praise shall ever be in my mouth."[2] "My song shall be alway of the lovingkindness of the LORD."[3]

II **Point**—We ought to respond to the call of JESUS.

The disciples, having heard the voice of the divine Master, at

[1] Eph. i. 3. [2] Ps. xxxiv. 1. [3] Ps. lxxxix. 1.

once "forsook all and followed Him."[1] The grace of JESUS prevents the will of man, but does not compel it; besides, we are always free to follow it or to resist it. What sad experiences have there not been of this truth! How many miserable beings, who have been called to know and serve GOD, have hardened their hearts so as not to hear His voice! How many others, a still more numerous class, who have once served Him faithfully, have afterwards lost the grace of their adoption, to whom the loss of this grace has been the cause of greater condemnation! Let us learn from this example; understanding well that, in order to attain to salvation, we must "walk worthy of our vocation wherewith we are called."[2] Let us clearly understand that, in order to be disciples of JESUS, we must renounce self, we must bear our cross and follow Him. We have entered into a solemn covenant at our baptism [and a still more solemn one when we entered the religious life]: but our LORD will not recognize us as His children at the last day unless we fulfil our promises.

Colloquy—Bless GOD the FATHER with lively gratitude for having called you by His grace to holy baptism [and to the religious life]: preferring you to so many others who would perhaps have profited by it more than yourself. Humble yourself before JESUS, your adorable Master, for your unfaithfulness to your baptismal promises; renew them before Him, and pray for the necessary grace to keep them for the future with fresh fervour.

Resolution—I will renew my baptismal vows very often during the day, and I will offer my LORD, out of gratitude for my being called to be a Christian, some acts of the virtue which I most need.

Offer the Resolution.

[1] St. Luke v. 11. [2] Eph. iv. 1.

Spiritual Reflection—"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." *St. John* xv. 16.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

IX Contemplation

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of GOD, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." *St. Luke* v. 1-6.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret, on which a large multitude of people has collected, and see upon the lake Simon's ship, from which JESUS is speaking to them.

3 **Prelude**—Give me, O LORD JESUS, the twofold grace of trustful faith and sincere humility, so that I may place no

obstacle in Thy way to the accomplishment of Thy divine will within me.

I Point—Consider the persons.

JESUS, full of grace and majesty, is speaking, and the sweetness of His words draws all hearts to Him. Consider the crowd which is listening to what He says; it presses upon Him, and it increases every moment. Behold Simon and his companion; they also are listening to the divine Master.

II Point—Listen to the words.

Let us mix with the crowd, and lend an attentive ear to the instructions of JESUS, and then let us remain after He has dismissed the people, and hear the order which He gives to Peter: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." O LORD JESUS, what is Thy intention? Peter is ignorant, nevertheless he does not hesitate to obey. He says: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." His faith and obedience are rewarded by a miracle: in his humility he is afraid, and cries out: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD."[1] Such a disposition wins the heart of the divine Master, and He says: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."[2]

III Point—Consider the actions.

Consider the goodness with which JESUS instructs the people; the order which He gives to Peter to let down the net; the miraculous draught, which prefigures the success of the gospel; His testimony to Peter's faith and humility, in graciously reassuring him and confirming him in his high vocation, when he was prostrate at His Master's feet.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Teacher of all truth, as the GOD Who alone can work miracles, as the

[1] St. Luke v. 8. [2] St. Luke v. 10.

Master of all hearts, Who calls to Him whom He wills, and uses the most feeble of His creatures as a means of accomplishing His greatest designs, provided that He finds in them obedience and humility. Bless Him for having established His church for the salvation and happiness of mankind, and for having made us children of it. Pray Him to put into your heart similar dispositions to those which St. Peter had, that, like him, you may be an instrument of His mercy to others.

Resolution—I will trust in GOD in adversity, and humble myself in success.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Without Me ye can do nothing." *St. John* xv. 5.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

X Meditation

THE CALL OF ST. PETER

"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at JESUS' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And JESUS said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." *St. Luke* v. 8-10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the Lake of Genesareth and St. Peter's boat upon it.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O GOD, to understand that a humble and teachable heart alone is fit for Thy service and to promote Thy glory.

I **Point**—Our LORD chooses in preference the humblest instruments for the accomplishment of His designs.

"From henceforth thou shalt catch men." By these words JESUS raised Peter to the dignity of the apostolate, he who was a poor unlearned fisherman. It seems, so far as we can judge, that it would have been more worthy of the wisdom of JESUS to have chosen for the apostolate an illustrious man, who was renowned for his ability and learning: but how different are the divine counsels from ours! Our Blessed LORD, Who has need of no one, generally makes the greatness of His power known in the weak: "He taketh up the simple out of the dust, and lifteth the poor out of the mire, that He may set him with the princes, even with the princes of His people."[1] How full of consolation is this truth! It is in the weak that GOD is glorified; I can then promote the glory of GOD, and that the more perfectly, since, being myself mere weakness and nothingness, I cannot attribute to myself any of the good of which our LORD may deign to make me the instrument. O infinite Wisdom! Which employs the things which are not to confound the things which are. O GOD, Who art so jealous of Thy glory, and Who hast said: "I will not give My glory to another:"[2] I repeat, from the bottom of my heart, these words of the royal psalmist, ravished with admiration at the sight of Thy glorious works: "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise."[3] "FATHER, glorify Thy Name."[4] I find my only happiness in being but a mere instrument in Thy hands, and I give myself up wholly and in the spirit of love to Thy divine will, ceaselessly repeating with the

[1] Ps. cxiii. 6, 7. [2] Isa. xlviii. 11. [3] Ps. cxv. 1.
[4] St. John xii. 28.

great apostle: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me."[1]

II Point—In order to be fit to carry out GOD's designs, we must place ourselves in His hands, with humility and confidence.

GOD gives us His grace gratuitously, and He chooses whom He pleases for the accomplishment of His designs; at the same time He most willingly employs those in whom He sees humility and confidence in Himself, as well as a teachable and obedient spirit: such were the dispositions of Peter when JESUS raised him to the apostolate. Obedience and submission caused him to say: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net."[2] Humility made him cry out when he saw the miracle: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD."[3] How pleasing are these virtues to our divine Master. O my SAVIOUR, Thou dost not call me, as Thou didst Peter, to preach Thy gospel, and to govern Thy church, but there are other good works for which Thou hast destined me, if, like him, I prepare myself to fulfil Thy designs. I can, if I am humble and docile to Thy will, work in very many different ways for Thy glory; I can make Thee known, loved, and served. Permit me not to neglect for the future the cultivation of those virtues which are so necessary for me, and which may promote Thy glory.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the GOD of power and wisdom, Who makes use as He pleases of the feeblest creatures, and yields to no one the glory of His works. Offer to Him all the different ways in which Peter, the other apostles, and all the saints, who placed no obstacle in the way of His designs for them, have promoted His glory. Humble yourself on account of your own dispositions of heart being so

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [2] St. Luke v. 5. [3] St. Luke v. 8.

habitually imperfect and so different from theirs. Offer yourself to your LORD, in the fulness of your heart to accomplish His will.

Resolution—I will strive to have contempt for myself, and confidence in GOD, by making frequent acts of humility.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me." 2 *Cor.* xii. 9.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XI Meditation

THE ZEAL OF JESUS AGAINST THOSE WHO PROFANED THE TEMPLE

"The Jews' passover was at hand, and JESUS went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My FATHER's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." *St. John* ii. 13-17.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the temple, a vast and magnificent building; an immense crowd collects from all parts;

at the entrance are the buyers and sellers whom JESUS drives authoritatively out of it.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O LORD JESUS, to imitate that pure and ardent zeal for the glory of Thy FATHER with which Thou wast animated.

I **Point**—JESUS is filled with zeal for the glory of His heavenly FATHER.

"Make not My FATHER'S house a house of merchandise." The SON of GOD, made Man in order to restore to the glory of GOD what had been lost by Adam's sin, of necessity was filled with a holy zeal for all that concerned that glory. JESUS CHRIST, as GOD, is rightly jealous for the honour due to His FATHER, of Whose rights He knows and of which He partakes. As Man He knows no limit to the adoration which He gives to the supreme majesty of GOD, towards Whom He manifests the most perfect submission and dependence, and is actuated by the greatest esteem and regard. He also uses all His authority and power to cause other men to revere, adore, and glorify the Sovereign LORD of heaven and earth, to Whom alone all homage is due. When, then, we consider how full He was of zeal for His FATHER'S glory, tempered by His wonted gentleness and patience, let us try to discover the spirit which actuated His life, and we shall find that though He was all gentleness and patience when He had to bear the insults which were heaped upon Him, yet that the injuries done to His heavenly FATHER called forth His zeal, and made Him jealous for His FATHER'S glory. Consider that that fire of zeal which filled His heart gave Him the great courage which nothing could intimidate, and which manifested itself in a holy severity. Am I like my divine Master and Pattern? Do I feel more keenly an injury done to our LORD than I do one done to myself? If this is not so with me in what does the con-

formity consist which ought to exist between JESUS my divine Master and Pattern and myself?

II Point—The zeal of JESUS is prudent, sweet, and full of love.

"He said unto them which sold doves, Take these things hence." Admire the sweetness and moderation of our divine Master. His zeal is great, nevertheless He tempers it when it seems fit to Him. JESUS would strike terror into the hearts of the buyers and sellers in the temple, but would not do harm to any one of them. He teaches us by this that zeal should always be ruled by prudence and tempered by love. Is my conduct conformed to that of my divine Master and Pattern? Is my zeal always exempt from bitterness, sharpness, and angry passion? O LORD JESUS, deign to fill me with Thy SPIRIT; grant that I may learn of Thee to practise that charity, which, while it crushes out the evil which it hates, spares the guilty, whom it loves, remembering that maxim of Thine: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."[1]

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the divine Model of all virtue, full of zeal for His FATHER'S glory. Humble yourself before Him because you have been so little conformed to His life. Draw near to Him Who is the source of all heavenly gifts, and pray Him to bestow upon you an ardent and pure zeal for His glory.

Resolution—I will do what I can to prevent evil, while I take care at the same time to be just and considerate towards others.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"The zeal of Thine house hath even eaten me." *Ps.* lxix. 9.

[1] St. Matth. ix. 13.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XII Meditation

THE REVERENCE THAT OUGHT TO BE PAID TO GOD IN CHURCHES

"The Jews' passover was at hand, and JESUS went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables." *St. John* ii. 13-15.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the entrance to the temple at Jerusalem.

2 Prelude—Inspire me, O my divine Master, with those feelings of adoration, reverence, and love which I ought to have when I am in Thy holy house.

I Point—With what reverence, fear, and love we ought to enter the house of the LORD.

GOD has always shown Himself jealous of the hononr due to His holy house: the history of the Old Testament is illustrative of this in the punishment of Heliodorus,[1] Rabsaces,[2] and many others. Let us now contemplate the holy indignation which JESUS manifested toward those who profaned the temple. But what was this famous temple in comparison with our churches, where our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST deigns to dwell

[1] 2 Macc. iii. [2] 2 Kings xviii.

upon our altars under the forms of bread and wine? With what reverence should we not come into His presence if we had a more lively faith. GOD, Who is present on our altars, is the divine WORD, co-equal with the FATHER, Who existed before the world was, "GOD of GOD, Light of Light; . . . By Whom all things were made,'"[1] and "without Whom was not anything made that was made;"[2] He is the King of glory and the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead. If, to make our approach to the throne of grace the more easy, He shrouds His glory and the brightness of His majesty with a veil of love, ought we the less to adore Him? On the contrary, His goodness in seeking our love ought to increase our adoration. It is the homage of our heart that JESUS requires of us! He Who is GOD, the Incarnate Wisdom, deigns to make us His delight. He says: "My delights were with the sons of men."[3] He tenderly invites us to come and seek from Him comfort and rest. He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[4] He offers us all that He can bestow upon us: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."[5] How is it that we cannot render to GOD, Who is so full of love, the just tribute of love that He asks of us? How is it that we do not say with a loving heart the words of the royal prophet: "O how aimable are Thy dwellings, Thou LORD of hosts! . . . One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my GOD than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness."[6]

II Point—We ought to make acts of reparation for the insults offered to our LORD in His temples.

JESUS, Who dwells out of love for us in His holy temple, is

[1] Nicene Creed. [2] St. John i. 3. [3] Prov. viii. 31.
[4] St. Matth. xi. 28. [5] Isa. lv. 1. [6] Ps. lxxxiv. 1-11.

indignantly outraged; some come to worship in GOD'S house, and draw near to JESUS at His altar with coldness and insensibility; some never draw near to Him at all, and never come to worship in the house of GOD; others, at whose impiety we shudder, outrage Him by their irreverence, profanation, and sacrilege. If we love Him, and are animated with zeal for His glory, what a cause of grief ought this to be to us. The angels behold and mourn over such ingratitude; they invite us to join with them; they say: "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel (weep) before the LORD our Maker; for He is the LORD our GOD, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand."[1] What a privilege ought we to esteem it to make amends to GOD for the indignities that He submits to out of love for us! Am I faithful in fulfilling this debt of gratitude?

Colloquy—Adore and bless GOD, because He deigns to be present in our churches and to dwell on our altars in the blessed Sacrament. Bitterly deplore, with a contrite and repentant heart, all the acts of irreverence of which you have been guilty in His holy house. Make acts of reparation for the indignities that those who have not known Him have committed against Him. Come before Him in a spirit of adoration and self-sacrifice, offering Him all that thou art and all that thou art able to do.

Resolution—I will make acts of reverence and love whenever I enter GOD'S house.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"O how aimable are Thy dwellings, Thou LORD of hosts." *Ps.* lxxxiv. 1.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Ps. xcv. 6, 7.

XIII Meditation

OUR LORD'S CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to JESUS by night." *St. John* iii. 1, 2.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine a solitary place in the dead of night; JESUS is speaking to Nicodemus, and wills that we should hear His voice.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, say to my soul, Thou art my GOD, and make me value as I ought the new birth that Thou hast given me in my baptism.

I Point—JESUS CHRIST is truly GOD: we ought then to believe and to practise what He has taught us.

"Nicodemus came to JESUS by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from GOD; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except GOD be with him."[1] These words were dictated by a candid mind, and one free from all prejudice; it is indeed impossible, if we examine in all good faith the proofs that JESUS has given us of His divinity, and of the divine origin of His teaching, not to recognize in Him the promised MESSIAH, the SON of GOD, the Author of the law of grace and love. This conviction is from our infancy graven deeply on our hearts; but has the practice which ought to have resulted from it caused our life to correspond to our faith? Nicodemus, in acknowledging the divinity of JESUS, ranked himself among His disciples, and came to Him, in order to learn from Him the way of salvation. Am I, like

[1] St. John iii. 2.

Nicodemus, impressed with the importance of being thoroughly instructed in the teaching and in the mind of CHRIST, and in that divine law which He brought down to us from heaven? "The law of the LORD is an undefiled law, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, and rejoice the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, and endureth for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is Thy servant taught: and in keeping of them there is great reward."[1] O LORD JESUS, engrave this divine law upon my heart, give me a perfect understanding of it, and grant that I may keep it by love.

II Point—Holy Baptism, by giving us a divine life in JESUS CHRIST, necessitates faith in His doctrine, and obedience to His commandments.

JESUS answered Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"[2] The necessity of baptism is the first truth which JESUS offers to the acceptance of His new disciple, because it is indeed the basis of all others: the Christian life depends on the new life of the SPIRIT, which is the fruit of CHRIST'S merits. This, O LORD, I firmly believe; but is my faith of a practical character? The grace of Baptism has opened to me the gate of heaven; in receiving that grace I have engaged to work unceasingly to destroy within myself the inclinations of the old man and to set up those of the new. That is the meaning of those words which our LORD added to these others of His: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh,

[1] Ps. xix. 7-11. [2] St. John iii. 5.

and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."[1] The old man is born of the flesh, the new man is of the spirit; if we allow the former to prevail over the latter, it will as certainly perish, as the graft dies upon the wild branches that have been neglected to be pruned. Suffer it not, O my GOD, that this evil should happen to me; grant me, by Thy grace, to die unceasingly to myself, so that I may live wholly unto Thee, Who art my only joy and happiness.

Colloquy—Thank your divine Master for having given you the new birth of the SPIRIT even before you were in a condition to desire it. Renew your baptismal vows. Seek all the aids which are necessary to renounce the flesh and live to the SPIRIT, in order to become a true disciple of JESUS CHRIST, Who is our GOD, our Master, and our Lawgiver.

Resolution—I will strive against the evil inclinations of my corrupt nature, and especially that one which has caused me most chiefly to fall into sin.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Whosoever is born of GOD doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him." 1 *St. John* iii. 9.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] St. John iii. 6.

XIV Meditation

THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

JESUS says to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the SPIRIT. . . . As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." *St. John* iii. 8-15.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine a solitary place in the dead of night; JESUS is speaking to Nicodemus, and wills that we should hear His voice.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, grant that I may be obedient to the voice of Thy SPIRIT, that I may be found worthy to receive all the benefits of Thy redemption, and attain to eternal happiness.

I Point—The HOLY SPIRIT enables us to advance in the life of the new man.

Our divine Master continued to instruct Nicodemus: after having revealed to him the mystery of the new life which the faithful receive in Him, He unveils the secrets of that interior life. Listen to His divine lessons; they are given for our edification. He says: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." This voice of the SPIRIT is that divine language which is full of the influences of grace and holy inspirations. It cannot be heard by souls who are distracted by worldly cares, or love of riches or honours; but

it seeks to find attentive, recollected hearts. "Thou canst not tell whence It cometh." It most frequently enters the soul after a meditation has been well made, or after a good communion, or after an instruction listened to with attention; but sometimes its visits are so rapid, that we have not been able to foresee them: an example touches us; a word spoken as it were by chance pierces us with a kindling and enlightening dart; a thought spontaneously arising in our minds. "Thou canst not tell whither It goeth." An inspiration faithfully followed out leads on to further grace, and sometimes even to a rapid growth in the interior life, making the increase in virtue more sure and easy. How diligent, watchful, faithful, and recollected ought I then to be, since the moments which my LORD spends with me are so precious and so short.

II Point—It is by the death of JESUS that we have obtained the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Let us continue to listen to the words of life which fall from the lips of JESUS. He says: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." After having spoken of the mystery of grace, our LORD thought it needful to refer to that of the Cross, the only source of all heavenly gifts. What sublime truths are comprised in these words! It is the second Moses, the Master of the new Law, Who raises before our eyes in the desert of this life, not a serpent of brass, but the Tree of the Cross; the fruits of this Tree of life will heal all the evils introduced into the world by the sin of our first parents. But why does JESUS say: "He must?" Doubtless such a remedy was necessary by reason of our fallen nature; but is the interest of a guilty creature of such absolute importance, that it requires the death of GOD? JESUS Himself solves the difficulty. He says: "Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever

believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten SON:" and as though He feared that He had not been sufficiently understood, He adds: "For GOD sent not His SON into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."[1] What infinite love! I am, O my GOD, incapable of responding to it; but at least receive my hearty thanks, and the firm resolution that I make henceforth to enter into all the designs of Thy love on my behalf, applying to myself Thy divine merits by faithfully corresponding to Thy grace.

Colloquy—Give honour to JESUS, and adore Him for all the love, gratitude, and confidence that His benefits awaken in your soul. Beseech Him to enable you to look efficaciously on the Sign of your salvation raised upon the holy mountain, to cure you of the sting of the deadly serpent. Beg Him also to give you grace to correspond entirely with the inspirations of the HOLY SPIRIT, which are the precious fruits of the great mystery of the Cross.

Resolution—I will be attentive and faithful to the inspirations of the HOLY SPIRIT from motives of love and gratitude.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." *St. John* iii. 8. "GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten SON." *St. John* iii. 16.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] St. John iii. 17.

XV Meditation

UPRIGHTNESS OF MIND AND PURITY OF HEART

JESUS says to Nicodemus: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD." *St. John* iii. 20, 21.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine a solitary place in the dead of night; JESUS is speaking to Nicodemus, and wills that we should hear His voice.

2 Prelude—O GOD, Who art the Truth Itself, teach me the truth, lead me into all truth: grant that all my actions may be done according to the rule and guidance of Thy SPIRIT, that so I may walk in Thy sight with loving confidence.

I Point—He that doeth evil hates and fears the light.

Nicodemus is taught the means by which grace is conferred, its effects upon the soul, and the mysteries of that love which procured it for us; it still remains that he should be taught that uprightness of conscience is necessary for the service of GOD. JESUS does so by these words: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." This lesson, so applicable to all at all times and in all places, was especially necessary to Nicodemus, who, on account of his belonging to the sect of the Pharisees, would soon have to beware of and guard himself against giving way to that hatred to JESUS in which that sect indulged, to Him Who was the true Light, and Who on that account was

such a standing rebuke to sin. Nicodemus knew how to profit by this wholesome instruction; how ought I to imitate his example, I who am destined to live in a world which avowedly hates JESUS and His Church, because the precepts of the gospel condemn its ways! I am conscious, O my GOD, of its iniquity; grant that I may not be an accomplice in it. But I shall be so if I cease to be faithful to the voice of my conscience, for the corruption of the heart infallibly poisons the mind. Grant, then, that by Thy grace I may always follow the wholesome advice that the holy apostle has given us in these words: "We are not of the night, nor of darkness: therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."[1]

II Point—He that doeth what is right loves and seeks the light.

Our divine Master adds: "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD." JESUS CHRIST perfectly confirmed by His works this truth which He had announced by His words; He so little feared the most searching looks, that He dared to defy His enemies to find anything in Him which was worthy of blame. He said: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"[2] "The works that I do in My FATHER'S Name they bear witness of Me. . . . If I do not the works of My FATHER, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works."[3] When, during His Passion, He was questioned about His doctrine, He replied: "Ask them which heard Me, . . . in secret have I said nothing."[4] This perfect integrity, which did not fear to be asked any questions, which thus characterized JESUS both in His doctrine and His works, must also

[1] 1 Thess. v. 5, 6.
[2] St. John viii. 46.
[3] St. John x. 25-38.
[4] St. John xviii. 20.

mark the true disciples of JESUS. They follow this noble example; but the esteem which even the wicked themselves are constrained to give them is not the only reward that they receive. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light." This light shines around and within him, and penetrates him more and more as he becomes capable of the divine illuminations, for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] Have I understood the greatness of this precious advantage? Are my ways perfectly upright before GOD? Am I worthy of being enlightened by His divine light?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Master of the truth, the very Truth and Righteousness itself. Pray Him to convert all those miserable beings who refuse to hear Him. Beseech Him to implant in your soul that uprightness which shall make you walk with zeal and confidence in the paths of holiness before your LORD and SAVIOUR and in the sight of all men.

Resolution—I will walk uprightly, according to the light of conscience, and despise the world's opinion of my actions.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Make me a clean heart, O GOD, and renew a right spirit within me." *Ps.* li. 10.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Prov. iv. 18.

XVI Meditation

THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF TRUE ZEAL

"JESUS and His disciples came into the land of Judæa; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. . . . And the disciples of John came unto him, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to Whom thou barest witness, behold, the Same baptizeth, and all men come to Him. John answered, . . . He must increase, but I must decrease." *St. John* iii. 22-30.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine the country of Judæa where JESUS CHRIST was baptizing by means of His disciples.

2 Prelude—Give me grace, O LORD JESUS, to despise myself, and to seek nothing but Thy glory, after the example of Thy holy forerunner, John the Baptist.

I Point—The virtues which accompany true zeal.

"Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to Whom thou barest witness, behold, the Same baptizeth, and all men come to Him." The disciples of St. John the Baptist, jealous of their master's renown, were not able without some pain to see JESUS administering baptism, and winning the respect and confidence of the people. This feeling is but too common in those who do not act from sufficiently pure motives; they have but little taste for the good which they have not themselves done; it even irritates them to think of it, and under specious pretexts they sometimes try to thwart it. Such injustice springs from secret pride, which insinuates itself into their intentions, even when they seem most pure, so that all the time that they

think they are seeking to promote nought but GOD'S glory they are in reality seeking their own. True zeal is exempt from this evil; it is pure, simple, disinterested, and very humble. We find an exact description of it in the reply of the Baptist: "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven:"[1] it is as though he said: GOD is the disposer of His gifts, He makes use of whom He pleases. Content with the lot in life His providence has assigned me, I ought to be far from envying the higher and more brilliant position which it has pleased Him to give to those who are more worthy than myself: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom."[2] It is right that the church should be formed under the guidance of Him Who is her legitimate Founder: "But the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."[3] Far from envying the success of Him Whom I acknowledge as my Master, I am filled at the thought of it with great joy; it is my only ambition to know that GOD is glorified. "He must increase," in glory and success, "and I must decrease."[4] I must with a good heart return to my original obscurity, since the time of my mission is passed; let Him finish that which He gave me grace to begin according to His will. Do I with dispositions of heart as humble and as pure as this apply myself to the good works which my LORD deigns to allow me to engage in?

II Point—The means of rendering zeal efficacious.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." We cannot succeed in any work undertaken for the glory of GOD and the good of souls if we are filled with love of self and are void of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. Note these few signs by which we may discern this: we are full of self when we find our only delight

[1] St. John iii. 27. [2] St. John iii. 29. [3] St. John iii. 29. [4] St. John. iii. 29, 30.

in the good works that we have done; when we can only enter into and relish the projects that we have planned; when we feel pain at others' success; when we reckon on our own industry for success, instead of relying on the help of GOD. It is not often with such dispositions that we do real good, because we act by ourselves and without GOD'S help. "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth:"[1] that is to say, of the weakness of the creature; but if, on the other hand, we know how to mistrust ourselves, and to forget ourselves so entirely as to impose upon ourselves acts of self-sacrifice; to undertake works of toil, to bear contradictions with patience, to surmount difficulties, to endure such disappointments and humiliations as are sure to accompany earnest works; if we ascribe faithfully to GOD all the glory that attends success, then the kingdom of GOD increases, while that of the creature decreases. And as our merciful FATHER never allows Himself to be behindhand in generous dealing, He Himself inspires us with all that He wishes us to be and to do, assisting us by His grace, so that the words of the Baptist are exemplified in us: "For He Whom GOD hath sent speaketh the words of GOD: for GOD giveth not the SPIRIT by measure unto Him."[2] Then the fruits produced in the soul are good and abundant, because they are the work of GOD, Who works freely in us. Am I touched by the thought that such advantages are within my reach? Are my desires sufficiently ardent to prompt me to make the efforts and sacrifices which my LORD expects of me as necessary to obtain them?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD as the sole Author of all good. Offer Him the glory which the faithfulness of His true servants may procure for Him. Humble yourself for all the recurrences of self-love and for all those faults which have hitherto marred

[1] St. John iii. 31. [2] St. John iii. 34.

what otherwise might have proved to be good deeds. Beseech your divine Master to empty you of self and to fill you with His SPIRIT.

Resolution—I will distrust myself, and strive that all my intentions may be pure and disinterested.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He must increase, but I must decrease." *St. John* iii. 30.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XVII Meditation

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

"JESUS left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee. And He must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. JESUS therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: JESUS saith unto her, Give Me to drink." *St. John* iv. 3-7.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself Jacob's well near to Samaria, and our LORD seated on the well.

2 **Prelude**—Grant, O LORD JESUS, that, in meditating on the mysteries of Thy divine life, my soul may be filled with great thankfulness towards Thee, and with an earnest zeal to win souls.

I Point—With what wisdom JESUS labours for our salvation.

It was not by chance that the Samaritan woman came to Jacob's well at the same moment that our LORD, wearied with His journey, was resting there. Divine wisdom, which presides over these events, had overruled them for the conversion of this sinner, and that Samaria should be brought to the knowledge of JESUS; it is thus that GOD causes meetings which appear to be most casual to have the most important consequences for the salvation of souls. Let us recall all the stratagems of grace which our LORD has so often employed to gain our hearts; every concurrence of circumstances which have appeared to be quite natural, but which have been nevertheless ordered by His love, as we have been afterwards led to see by the happy results which have followed. Let us adore the profound wisdom and the infinite goodness of GOD, but let us not be content with a mere feeling of gratitude. GOD demands of us a proof of our gratitude in the matter of serving Him for the good of our neighbours in the same way as others, who have on their part done us good, have aided us. Let us imitate the example of our divine Example. He allows no opportunity to escape of working for the salvation of sinners; He passes through Samaria in order to accomplish the designs known to His FATHER; He sits upon the well waiting for His wandering sheep, and, wearied as He was, He thinks of nothing except ensuring the salvation which He has gained for them. O my divine Master! grant me grace to be as eager as Thou wert in carrying out the designs of our heavenly FATHER with zeal and faithfulness.

II Point—With what ardour JESUS desires our salvation.

JESUS, desiring to converse with the Samaritan woman, addresses the first word to her; thus it is that His goodness deigns to prevent sinners, thus has He so often sought me,

soliciting me by His grace to give up sin and shake off lukewarmness before I can hope to return to Him. He says: "Give Me to drink:" He Who is the Sovereign Master of heaven and earth deigns to abase Himself to ask of us, and what is still more wonderful, He will not be put off by the refusals He meets with, but repeats His demands with a long-suffering worthy of His divine patience. "Give Me to drink." JESUS thirsts, but it is for the salvation of souls, for their sanctification, their happiness. This word, "Give Me to drink," He says to me each time that He asks me to practise some interior act of virtue, or to perform some act of self-sacrifice; wilt Thou not, O LORD, quench this thirst which I have and which is caused by the ardour of the love which I have for thee?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the supreme Wisdom, Which orders and conducts all events; as infinite Goodness, Which seeks the salvation of His creatures. Thank Him for His loving search of which you have been the object. Beseech Him to make you understand the deep meaning of those words: "Give Me to drink." Promise to neglect nothing so as to satisfy the ardent desire which JESUS has for thy sanctification and that of thy neighbour.

Resolution—I will eagerly seize every occasion to practise those virtues which I stand in need of, in order to please JESUS CHRIST. I will, in order to please JESUS CHRIST, let the same motive induce me, so far as I can, to promote the salvation of my neighbour.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, zealous for souls, have pity upon us.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XVIII Meditation

THE GIFT OF GOD, LIVING WATER

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. JESUS answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." *St. John* iv. 9, 10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself Jacob's well near to Samaria, and our LORD seated on the well.

2 **Prelude**—Open to me, O my LORD JESUS, the sacred fountains of Thy grace, make me to understand how priceless they are, and excite in my soul for the time to come the desire to draw from them unceasingly life and salvation.

I **Point**—The blessings of grace are precious.

GOD dispenses the blessings of this life with a kind of prodigality, such as, health, honours, prosperity, riches. He dispenses them both to the righteous and to sinners; and these last have oftentimes the largest share. This is because blessings of this kind are but earthly, and divine Wisdom holds them in too little esteem to make the obtaining of them an important matter. But it is not so with regard to spiritual blessings, the interior visitations and gifts of grace which conform men to the image and likeness of GOD. GOD has willed that the blood of His SON should be their price, and that they should only be given to those who are united to Him as members to their Head. If, judging by the principles pursued in commercial affairs, we

value things according to the price that they fetch in the market, what price can be set upon grace? "This gift of GOD" was granted to us only at the price of the death of our SAVIOUR and our GOD. Those words, "If thou knewest the gift of GOD," were not said by JESUS to the Samaritan woman only; He addresses them to each one of us in particular, in order to excite in our hearts the desire of knowing how precious this blessing is. Let us entreat Him to make known to us its infinite value; and at the same time to make us understand that it is "The gift of GOD," not what we have obtained by any merit of our own, but what He has given us as a purely gratuitous effect of His goodness towards us. Vouchsafe then, O GOD, to make these great truths known to me: "O grant me understanding and I shall live."[1]

II Point—The blessings of grace are most desirable.

"If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Why does our divine Master call the precious gift of His grace living water? It is in order to make us understand what the effects are which this gift produces in our souls: as water washes and cleanses that which is soiled, so does the grace of GOD, by destroying sin, efface its stains. As also vapour by condensation becomes dew and soft rain, and refreshes the plants and causes the earth to bear fruit, so does the grace of JESUS animate the fervour of holy desires, and guide the will of man to do what is right and efficacious. Lastly, as water is necessary for the nourishment of living things, and is used in the preparation of our food, so does the grace of JESUS maintain life in our souls, and help us in all our actions; without it we can do nothing by which we can become fit to enter heaven. JESUS calls the mysterious water of His grace "Living water," not only because it flows

[1] Ps. cxix. 144.

from Him abundantly, as from a never-failing Fountain pure and clear; but also because it bestows and maintains the life of the soul, being at the same time its principle and its nourishment. What a happy meeting must it have been for the Samaritan woman, to have found this divine Fountain and One Who could open it for her! Had she known this, far from allowing herself to be prevented by JESUS, she would have been the first to ask for that precious water. Am I, who am better instructed and enjoy greater advantages than this Samaritan woman, careful "to draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation."[1]

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the divine Fountain of those living waters which spring up into life eternal. Show Him your gratitude for the gift, or rather the ineffable abundance of grace that He has brought us from heaven: the gift of His divinity through the Incarnation; of His atoning merits, and of His peace through His redemption; of His own Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. Entreat Him to make you appreciate these priceless blessings as much as you ought, and to teach you to draw more and more grace from the sacred fountains which His goodness has opened to us.

Resolution—I will think often during the day of the gifts that my SAVIOUR has bestowed upon me, so that I may conceive for them the esteem that they deserve, and excite deep gratitude within my own heart.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"If thou knewest the gift of GOD." *St. John* iv. 10.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Isa. xii. 3.

XIX Meditation

GOD IS OUR ONLY HAPPINESS, AND THE WORTHY OBJECT OF PERFECT DEVOTION

"JESUS answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." *St. John* iv. 13, 14.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself Jacob's well, a little way from the city of Samaria, and JESUS seated on it, talking to the woman of Samaria.

2 **Prelude**—Vouchsafe, O LORD JESUS, to quench my thirst for the things of this earth, and to teach me to worship the FATHER in spirit, and in truth,[1] that I may be found worthy to drink fully of those waters which spring up into everlasting life.[2]

I Point—GOD alone can satisfy the heart.

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." This water which does not quench the thirst of which JESUS speaks is the possession of the goods of this world, the empty satisfactions of pride and all other passions. It is in vain that many foolish persons, incited by the desire of happiness which GOD has put into men's hearts, seek to quench their thirst by the pleasures of this life; they find in them only troubled waters, which increase their thirst instead of satisfying it. It is not so with those who seek for their happiness in GOD. Our LORD said: "Whoso drinketh of the water which I shall give him, shall never thirst." GOD, Who made our hearts for Himself,

[1] St. John iv. 24. [2] St. John iv. 14.

formed them in such a fashion that they cannot be satisfied and happy but in Him alone. Since His goodness has deigned to assign to such poor and unworthy creatures as we are so glorious a destiny, since He wills to be, so to speak, the strength and stay of our souls, in Whom alone they can find life and repose, is it not just, is it not to our infinite advantage, to seek for them nowhere except in Him alone? "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Union with GOD not only bestows consolation and repose upon our souls in this life; commenced here in this land of exile, it is continued and consummated in a blessed eternity. What powerful motives for disdaining all that is not GOD, and for clinging to Him alone! Grant me grace, O GOD, to be entirely actuated by such motives, and to conform my life to the inspirations of Thy HOLY SPIRIT.

II Point—Worship in spirit and in truth is alone pleasing to GOD.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth: for the FATHER seeketh such to worship Him. GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."[1] These words of our divine Master teach us how to dispose our hearts aright to receive the living water which quenches every earthly desire; namely, by worshipping in spirit and in truth. It is not sufficient to pay honour to GOD by performing certain exterior religious acts, the homage we pay Him must come from true and earnest hearts; an outside show may deceive men, but cannot deceive GOD, Who knows the very secrets of the heart. He said, speaking to the children of Israel: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."[2] GOD rejects all prayer which is not

[1] St. John iv. 23, 24. [2] St. Mark vii. 6.

animated by true religion and piety, all half-hearted service. I must then adore Him with an upright, fervent heart if I desire to please Him, and to receive the grace which flows so freely from Him.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Fountain of living water which alone can quench the thirst of your souls. Entreat Him to teach you how to worship His FATHER in spirit and in truth, that you may be found worthy to draw continually from the sacred Fountains of living water. Pray Him to give you His grace, especially those gifts of grace which you need. Promise to be faithful to Him.

Resolution—I will apply myself earnestly to-day to perform all my religious exercises, and to keep my rule of life, animated with a true desire of glorifying GOD and pleasing Him.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." *St. John* iv. 24. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." *St. John* iv. 14.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XX Contemplation

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"Then cometh JESUS to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob

gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. JESUS therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water." (After a long conversation between our LORD and this woman) "The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a Man Which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the CHRIST?" *St. John* iv. 5-29.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself Jacob's well, outside the walls of Samaria, and our LORD seated on it, talking to the woman of Samaria, who comes thither to draw water.

3 **Prelude**—Vouchsafe, O LORD JESUS, to speak to me those life-giving words which enlighten the mind and convert the heart! I ask it of Thee by the zeal that Thou hast for my salvation.

I **Point**—Consider the persons.

Consider JESUS, full of sweetness, goodness, and modest dignity. He is seated on the well, and speaks to the Samaritan woman, who is standing near. Her dress and her manner betoken her humble birth; she listens to JESUS.

II **Point**—Listen to the words.

JESUS speaks first to the Samaritan woman, and says, "Give me to drink:" He speaks first, for He thirsts for the salvation of that poor sinner. She answers Him at first rudely and scornfully. He persists in addressing her, and excites her curiosity in order to arrest her attention: "If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The Samaritan woman said unto Him: "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?" She does not as yet understand the meaning of the words she has just heard, but never-

theless her heart began to feel their secret power; she becomes more teachable, and seeks to be enlightened. "JESUS answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." The woman, still having a low and imperfect idea of what this water really is, nevertheless longs for it, and says: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. JESUS saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither." She, impatient to get what she asks for, replies that she has no husband. JESUS takes the opportunity then of showing her that nothing is hid from His eyes. She recognises Him as a prophet, tells Him her doubts, listens to His instructions, and says that she believes in the promised MESSIAH, for Whose coming she waits. JESUS seeing her thus prepared, says unto her: "I that speak unto thee am He." At these words she is filled with ecstasy, and runs to tell all whom she meets: "Come, see a Man Which told me all that ever I did: is not this the CHRIST?" And the Samaritans believed in JESUS at her word.

III Point—Consider the actions.

JESUS, wearied by His long journey on foot, sat on the well. The Samaritan woman comes to draw water. It was there that the Good Shepherd awaited His erring sheep. He speaks to her, and grace enters little by little into her soul, touching, converting, and changing her from a sinner into an apostle. Filled with this apostolic spirit which animates her, she leaves her water-pot, and runs to announce to the inhabitants of Samaria that she has found the CHRIST.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and Master JESUS CHRIST as the LORD of all grace. Offer Him all the souls that He has won to Himself by the power and attractiveness of His holy words. Thank Him for having deigned to speak to your

heart in order to enlighten it and influence it. Pray Him to give you the grace of conversion as He bestowed it on the woman of Samaria, and, above all, an ardent zeal to make Him known and loved by all men.

Resolution—I will often during the day cultivate a recollected spirit so as to listen to the voice of JESUS speaking to me. I will try to influence others by my example, and if I can by my words, to advance in the knowledge and love of Him.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"If thou knewest the gift of GOD." *St. John* iv. 10.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXI Meditation

THE WILL OF GOD THE SPIRITUAL FOOD OF THE SOUL OF JESUS

"In the meanwhile His disciples prayed Him saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? JESUS saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." *St. John* iv. 31-34.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself Jacob's well, outside the city of Samaria.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, discover to me the secret springs of that loving obedience of Thine which is Thy meat,

and which ought to be mine also, since I ought in all things to follow Thy example.

I Point—The soul of JESUS is nourished by the will of His FATHER.

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." JESUS came from heaven to do His FATHER'S will, and gave Himself up to this glorious work with so much fervour and love, that He was occupied with nought else, as He Himself says: "I must be about My FATHER'S business."[1] And He goes on still further, and gives us to understand that His soul rests and finds its relief in the will of His FATHER; as a weary man finds fresh strength in the food he takes, so does the soul of JESUS derive renewed courage in the accomplishment of that divine will which supports Him in the midst of the protracted and painful trials of His mission on earth. Do I know and understand well this state of my SAVIOUR'S soul? Am I filled with a like spirit to His in seeking and loving to do His FATHER'S will? Above all, do I know how to follow His example, in loving this divine will, and never growing weary in accomplishing it.

II Point—Very few persons know of this nourishment of the soul.

It is generally known that, in order to be GOD'S good and faithful servant, we must do His holy will, but it is seldom that the consequences of this principle are fully admitted in practice. The will of GOD is loved as long as it does not require of us too painful sacrifices. We desire to be religious, but in our own way and by following our own will, and this is easily detected by the impatience we manifest if anything occurs to interrupt the religious exercises or the performance of the good works which we have arranged to do. If we really knew the mystical

[1] St. Luke ii. 49.

food of JESUS and His saints, and how to use it, we should see nought but GOD'S will in everything; we should then be able to turn every circumstance into an occasion of spiritual profit, and we should be established in a deep and lasting peace, in which nothing could disturb us. Every motive unites to carry us on to the practice of this precious virtue: GOD is thereby greatly glorified; without it no other good work that we can do is pleasing to Him. "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."[1] The virtue of conformity to the will of GOD is that virtue of all others which makes us most quickly and most perfectly like our LORD JESUS CHRIST: shall I not strive after it henceforward with greater ardour and perseverance? It is at first painful, but the grace which is bestowed on one who practises this virtue is a hidden mine of strength, a fruit full of nourishment, which we cannot fail to taste in all its sweetness when we have the courage to break through the outer shell which envelopes it.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the worthy SON of your heavenly FATHER, as a SON Who is submissive, obedient and full of love. Pray Him to give you those feelings of zeal and love to do GOD'S will which were the food and nourishment of His soul, and to give you the strength and courage which is necessary in order to overcome the obstacles which might hinder you in accomplishing it perfectly. Offer and devote yourself wholly to the service of your heavenly FATHER.

Resolution—I will do everything to-day with the one intention of fulfilling GOD'S will. If I have anything painful to do or to bear to-day, I will reflect on the loving obedience of JESUS, and unite myself to it.

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 22.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." *St. John* iv. 34.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXII Contemplation

HEALING THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"So JESUS came again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that JESUS was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said JESUS unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. JESUS saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth." *St. John* iv. 46-50.

2 **Prelude**—Imagine a street, a public place in Cana; and then the road by which the father of the sick child returns to Capernaum.

3 **Prelude**—Deign, O LORD JESUS, to inspire me with a lively faith and with much confidence in Thy power, which is so full of goodness, so that I may honour Thee as I ought, and obtain from Thee everything which is necessary to my spiritual welfare.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider JESUS, Who always has that grave, loving and dignified bearing which proves that He is more than man. Behold the apostles, simple men, attentive to all the acts of their divine Master; and then the nobleman whose son is sick. He is full of reverence for JESUS, and fears a refusal; an earnest desire to be heard and answered is vividly depicted on his face, and is expressed in his manner and in every one of his movements.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Consider JESUS surrounded by a crowd of people. An afflicted father presses forward; his dear son is near to death. What a blessed thing to have recourse to JESUS under this heavy trial: the heart of JESUS is full of power and goodness, blessings flow from Him as their source. The answer given by the divine Master to the prayer of the afflicted father is at first only a gentle reproach for his want of faith and trust: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But the nobleman persists, and says: "Sir, come down ere my child die." To which our LORD says: "Thy son liveth:" and at the same moment the all-powerful virtue of His divinity worked the cure that He said should take place. The nobleman went his way, full of hope and joy. While he is on his way he met his servants, who came to tell him: "Thy son liveth." He asks at what hour he began to mend, and learns that it was at the exact hour at which JESUS had said: "Thy son liveth." His faith is established, and he, with his whole family, believes in JESUS.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST as your almighty GOD, Who as He pleases sends sickness and death. Thank Him for the miracles which He worked, to

serve as the foundation of our faith and that of all ages. Make an act of trust in the infinite goodness which He shows forth in all His works. Pray Him to cure the sickness of your soul as He cured the nobleman's son, and to confirm your faith as He did the faith of that family.

Resolution—I will frequently pray to JESUS by lifting up my soul to Him, and beg Him to cure all its ills. I will also pray frequently to-day for sinners, earnestly entreating JESUS not to suffer them to fall into eternal death.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, Fountain of goodness, have mercy upon us.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXIII Meditation

THE GOODNESS AND POWER OF JESUS IN HEALING THE SICK AND CASTING OUT DEVILS

"And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. . . . And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him." *St. Mark* i. 21-34.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the house of Simon and

Andrew, into which JESUS had entered; a large crowd is assembled at the door of the house.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who art now neither less good nor less powerful than Thou wert in the days of Thy mortal life; inspire me with a faith and confidence like unto that with which Thy people were filled at the sight of the miracles which Thou didst work.

I **Point**—JESUS wills to cure all our ills.

The inhabitants of Capernaum and its environs, informed of the presence of JESUS in that town, brought to Him all their sick and those possessed with devils, that He might heal them. Of such a character should be our anxiety in seeking from JESUS the remedy for the sicknesses of our souls; the divine Master now as then unites the power of GOD to the tender compassion of a SAVIOUR, and our spiritual trials touch Him all the more because they are followed by far more grievous consequences than are the infirmities of the body. He desires that we should come and tell Him all our ills with faith and confidence, and what can be easier? His presence is not confined to one place only, as at the time of His mortal life; the number of people who come to Him cannot now hinder our approaching Him freely; He is ever ready to hear us and to answer us. What an inestimable blessing to have a SAVIOUR so powerful, so good, and so easily approached! How is it then that, in view of all this, my soul is still so sick and languishing? Is it not because my faith is so weak, and that I have so little desire of being healed. Give me, O LORD JESUS, the dispositions of heart of those sick persons in the holy gospel, that, like them, I may obtain an abundant share of Thy mercies.

II **Point**—JESUS desires that we should labour to heal the infirmities of our neighbour.

JESUS, our divine Model, wills that we should imitate Him in that universal kindness which rejected no one, but caused Him to receive all who came to Him, and to do good to all men with consideration and tenderness. We cannot like Him heal the sick, or free those who are possessed with devils, but we can have compassion upon those who suffer, and sympathise with them when it is impossible to comfort them in any other way; above all, we can do that which our divine Master particularly desires us to do, we can fervently and frequently pray for the healing of those souls who are diseased by sin, for the deliverance of those wretched ones whom Satan holds in bondage, not visibly, but by a secret possession produced by mortal sin, and incomparably more deplorable than any sickness, because it leads to eternal death. Am I well instructed in my Master's school? Have I derived from Him that tender compassion and sympathy for the miseries of my neighbour which leads me to comfort him with real, true and sincere regard?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your LORD, your GOD, and your SAVIOUR. Thank Him for all that He has done for the healing of your soul. Lay before Him, in all humility and trust, the ills which yet exist in your soul. Pray for sinners, especially for those in whom you ought to have a peculiar interest. Beseech Him to conform your heart to His, by filling it with an ardent and universal love for all men.

Resolution—I will pray to-day more fervently, so as to obtain from my LORD the entire healing of my soul. I will try, by my prayers and all the means in my power, to procure that healing of the soul which is needed by all sinners.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." *St. Matth.* viii. 2.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXIV Meditation

JESUS SUSTAINS ACTION BY PRAYER

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." *St. Mark* i. 35.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Imagine the solitary place where JESUS retired to pray; a deep silence reigns there.

2 **Prelude**—"Lord, teach me to pray;"[1] pour upon me the spirit of grace and prayer, in order that with Thy help I may do all things well.

I **Point**—JESUS sustains action by prayer.

JESUS did not undertake the toil of His public life until after thirty years of retirement; in order, too, to prepare more immediately for it, He passed forty days in prayer and fasting in the wilderness; when actively engaged in His public ministry He still took from its important duties some hours in which to hold communion with His FATHER, thereby teaching us that prayer should always sustain and accompany all our actions. If JESUS, notwithstanding the necessary and intimate union of His holy soul with His divinity, did not think that He could neglect prayer, can we reasonably, after such an example, believe that so powerful a means of reanimating our souls will be useless? Prayer is to the soul what sleep and food are to

[1] St. Luke xi. 1.

the body, it gives her rest and vigour. "My heart is smitten down and withered like grass, so that (because) I forget to eat my bread."[1] This bread is that of prayer; when the use of it is neglected fervour grows cold and is exhausted, and even if our works can still remain really good without the aid of prayer, it is certain that they cannot be either closely united to those of JESUS or animated by His Spirit. Besides, it is most difficult to persevere for a long time in good works unless we take care to refresh our souls oftentimes by lifting them up in prayer to GOD; for we are like clocks which run down unless they are wound up at stated times. Am I faithfully following the example of my divine Master? Am I seeking in prayer to cultivate an interior spirit and to gain the strength which I need in order to make my actions acceptable to GOD.

II Point—JESUS retires to a desert place to pray.

"JESUS went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." JESUS goes far away from all tumult. We may derive from this circumstance another important lesson: the HOLY SPIRIT has said: "Before thou prayest, prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth the LORD."[2] We tempt GOD if we pray without preparation. This preparation consists chiefly in banishing from the mind for the moment all other cares and interests, so that we may be entirely recollected in the presence of GOD. St. Bernard was in the habit, when he entered into a church to pray, of saying to his distracting thoughts: "Remain here outside, and I will join you again when I come out." This is what we should do; for during prayer our souls should be entirely alone with GOD: "For sweet is Thy voice, and Thy countenance is comely."[3] Prayer is heard only in silence and retirement. GOD has Himself said, in speaking to the faithful soul: "I will bring her into

[1] Ps. cii. 5. [2] Ecclus. xviii. 23.
[3] Song of Solomon ii. 14; 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."[1] Have I done anything hitherto towards obtaining these much to be desired communications of the SPIRIT? Do I, when I pray, take care to retire into that interior spirit which consists in rejecting every other recollection, and every thought except that of GOD alone?

Colloquy—Unite yourself in spirit with the adoration which our Blessed LORD Himself pays to His FATHER in retirement, and to that which the angels themselves pay to Him. Humble yourself before Him, because your prayers have been so defective and so unlike His. Ask Him to give you the spirit of recollectedness and prayer, and that interior spirit which makes prayer easy, and your actions acceptable to GOD.

Resolution—I will renew to-day my firm determination never to omit or shorten my meditation except in case of necessity. I will often during the day lift up my heart to GOD in ejaculatory prayer.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." *St. Luke* xviii. 1. "I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." *Hosea* ii. 14.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Hosea ii. 14.

XXV Meditation

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE ZEAL OF JESUS

"And when it was day, JESUS departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of GOD to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." *St. Luke* iv. 42, 43.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Imagine the desert place where JESUS retired to pray; it is now crowded by a multitude who come to seek Him.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, zealous for the salvation of all men, vouchsafe to inspire my soul with a universal and active zeal like Thine.

I **Point**—JESUS toils for the salvation of all men.

"I must preach the kingdom of GOD to other cities also, for therefore am I sent." By these words our LORD shows us the extent of His zeal. He was not sent to one city nor to one people only; for, although during His mortal life He confined His preaching to Judæa, before leaving His apostles to return to heaven, He said to them: "Go ye, and teach all nations."[1] JESUS is the SAVIOUR of all men. He has for all the feelings of a FATHER: it is because of this tender love of His that I have the blessedness of knowing the true faith; for our forefathers were Gentiles. What gratitude ought we not to feel at the remembrance of this inestimable benefit! With what love ought not

[1] St. Matth. xxviii. 19.

our hearts to be filled for a SAVIOUR Who is so good and so full of tenderness!

II Point—JESUS wills that we should toil for the salvation of all men.

JESUS, our SAVIOUR, is also our Model: He wills that we should derive from Him that zeal for all men that works so efficaciously for the salvation of the whole world; but how can I take part in such a vast design, I who am a poor weak creature? The goodness of my LORD provides me with many ways and means of doing so. It is He Who has put it into the hearts of men to establish religious orders and societies, which have for their object the spreading of the true faith, either by foreign missions, or else by giving a Christian education to the young. Other works, too, are established to instruct the ignorant, to put before sinners the means of conversion, and to offer to weak and feeble souls exposed to temptation a home where they may find a refuge and a shelter. It is in these and such like works that I ought to aid according to my ability, if I would imitate the zeal of JESUS, and fulfil the duties of a true Christian. What earnestness have I hitherto shown in fulfilling the designs of GOD'S providence in these respects? JESUS will one day demand of me an account of the good which I could have done; what answer shall I make to Him if I have neglected to do it? He will say to me then, I have given My blood and My life for the souls that were so dear to Me, and thou, who didst profess to love Me, hast let them perish for want of help; thou didst not really love Me. O LORD JESUS, let me never deserve such a reproach!

Colloquy—Humbly thank your LORD for the zeal that He has deigned to have for your salvation, so worthy of a SAVIOUR Who is GOD, and of which He has given us up to this time so many proofs. Entreat Him to conform your life to His, by communicating to you that zeal with which He burns for the

salvation of all men. Promise Him never to neglect to do any work which His providence puts before you to do by which you can promote the salvation of souls. Ask Him to bestow upon you that interior spirit which is so necessary to make good works really fruitful and acceptable to GOD.

Resolution—I will fulfil to-day with greater care and fresh ardour all that my daily duties require of me. I will earnestly consider in the presence of GOD whether I cannot add something more to the works which I have undertaken for the salvation of souls.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—JESUS, Thou zealous Lover of souls, give me such zeal as Thou hast.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXVI Meditation

CONTEMPT OF RICHES AND LOVE OF THE POOR

"It came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And JESUS said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." *St. Luke* ix. 57, 58.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the road on which our LORD JESUS was walking with His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, Who although Thou art LORD of all the riches of heaven and earth, hast yet embraced out of

love for me a life of the greatest poverty, deign to give me grace to despise the goods of this world, and out of love for Thee incline my heart to love and succour the poor.

I Point—The poverty of JESUS is extreme.

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."[1] Such is the touching picture drawn by our LORD Himself of His extreme poverty. Far from possessing any superfluity, He was in want of the most necessary things; He had not where to lay His head; He had not a place where He might be at liberty to take the repose He so often required in the midst of His incessant toils. But let us strive to penetrate His inmost thoughts, and seek to discover there the cause of this great deprivation. JESUS embraced voluntary poverty by choice. He loved it as His companion, as His cherished bride; He bore with joy all the privations, the sufferings, and the inconveniences to which He was subject, because they offered Him an efficacious means of repairing all the ills which are caused by an over-attachment to the riches and good things of this life. JESUS CHRIST teaches this lesson to His true disciples, to those who listen to and obey His teaching, namely that these passing things of this world are too frivolous to be worthy of our love, and that a soul made to possess GOD in heaven ought to despise all the vain things of earth. If we possess earthly things, we should use them with fear and circumspection, as a loan of which we are only the stewards; if we do not possess them, we should rejoice that we are at least in this respect like our Blessed LORD. Are these my feelings? They are founded on the spirit of JESUS; they are diametrically opposed to the spirit of the world, and without them we cannot have any true Christianity.

II Point—We can succour JESUS in His poverty.

[1] St. Matth. viii. 20.

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."[1] Notwithstanding the little love that we have for JESUS, we cannot meditate on these words without envying the happiness of those who received our dear LORD into their houses, and had the consolation of ministering to His necessities. What joy would ours have been if it had been granted to us to offer hospitality to such a guest; to bestow on Him all the care which our love would have prompted us to give Him; to hear from His divine lips words of commendation! This happiness can be ours: though the presence of JESUS on earth is no longer visible, it is not less real, and His poverty is always the same. He stands in need of our help in the erection and adornment of churches, and in the support of schools and charitable institutions, as well as in home and foreign missions. How pleasing to JESUS is a soul who, out of love and devotion to Him in the Blessed Sacrament, is zealous in decorating His altar with loving care! He also lives in the persons of His poor. He says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."[2] What are my feelings, and what is my conduct, with regard to JESUS, poor and destitute, and still needing my aid and care in these His representatives on earth? May I one day hope to hear those words addressed to me: "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."[3] "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."[4]

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST, as your Creator

[1] St. Matth. viii. 20.
[2] St. Matth. xxv. 40.
[3] St. Matth. xxv. 34.
[4] St. Matth. xxv. 34.

and as the Sovereign LORD of all good things both in heaven and earth. Thank Him with deep gratitude that He has vouchsafed to deprive Himself of them for love of you. Offer to Him all that you do, whether in the embellishment of His churches, or the adorning of His altar, or in comforting His poor; pray Him to accept your work. Ask Him for a true spirit of faith, so that you may see nought but Him in whatever works of charity you may do.

Resolution—I will often secretly offer during the day all that I possess to JESUS, praying Him to teach me how to use it to a good and holy purpose. I will keep a watch over my good works, lest I allow negligence or human motives to enter into them.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." *St. Luke* ix. 58. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." *St. Matth.* xxv. 40.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXVII Contemplation

JESUS REBUKES THE WIND AND THE SEA

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"And when they had sent away the multitude, they took JESUS, even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. And there arose a great storm

of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" *St. Mark* iv. 36-40.

2 Prelude—Picture to yourself the Sea of Galilee agitated by a storm of wind, the day is closing in, and JESUS and His disciples are in a ship.

3 Prelude—O my divine SAVIOUR, deign to inspire my soul with a firm trust in Thee which shall do Thee honour, and make me worthy of Thy protection.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider our Blessed LORD in the ship, overcome with fatigue, and on the point of falling asleep. The disciples are with Him in the ship. The crowd on the shore is dispersing, and is soon lost to sight, for the darkness increases every moment.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

JESUS is asleep, but He is GOD, and watches over His beloved disciples. Soon the storm arises, and the little ship, beaten by the waves, is now full. The apostles are terrified; their faith in the divinity of their Master is not strong or practical enough for them to feel reassured by His presence alone, although that presence ought to have made them feel certain that He could and would save them. They cried out: "Lord, save us, we perish."[1] This cry penetrated to the heart of JESUS; He pro-

[1] St. Matth. viii. 25.

tected them. He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and immediately there was a great calm. Thus it is, O my divine Master, that Thou hast but to speak one word to restore peace to the souls who are tried by affliction or temptation. When the danger was over, JESUS gently reproached His disciples: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"[1] What! were they who had called JESUS to their aid wanting in faith? They had enough faith certainly to obtain the miraculous protection of their LORD, but His love asks of them something more perfect than this: He wills that they should have that disposition of love and trust which banishes fear. O LORD JESUS, dispose my heart to receive this holy disposition.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the almighty GOD, Who at His will commands the elements and all creatures, as the infinitely good Master Who is never so near His own as when He seems to abandon them to the dangers which surround them. Humble yourself on account of the distrust to which you have perhaps often given way. Ask Him for that lively trust which glorifies Him. Pray Him to come to your help, and to deliver you from the dangers which surround you.

Resolution—I will oftentimes to-day make acts of trust in GOD, especially when any trial from within and from without besets me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Lord, save us." *St. Matth.* viii. 25.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] St. Matth. viii. 26.

XXVIII Meditation

FAITH AND TRUST IN JESUS

"JESUS said unto His disciples, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" *St. Mark* iv. 40.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself again the sea of Galilee agitated by a storm; it is the dusk of evening; the frail bark seems on the point of perishing in the waters.

2 Prelude—O SAVIOUR, full of all goodness, Thou Who deignest to be honoured by our confidence, strengthen, I beseech Thee, so firmly my hope in Thee, that no trials, however great, may be able to shake it.

I Point—We ought to hope in JESUS in the midst of all calamities that may befall us, whether public or private.

This earth is a place of exile; while we sojourn here we must be tried, being subject to all kinds of ills, both public and private; private accidents follow close one upon another, and often unite to afflict us. Those who know not GOD only see in these different events either the effects of man's malice, or a certain concurrence of circumstances directed by some secret power which they call "chance" or "fate:" but as for ourselves, by the light of faith, we recognise GOD's hand in them, overruling and permitting these troubles, to purify and sanctify His elect; we know that our SAVIOUR is in the midst of us, and will help us in His own appointed time. But is our faith and our confidence always as firm as it ought to be if that time seems long in coming? Do we not often allow feelings of distrust to arise in our hearts, or the thought that our LORD will

forsake us? To admit such a thought is to do Him a direct injury: "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?"[1] Do we think that JESUS is less zealous than we are for our real interests; and do we imagine that we know better than He does the time and the means for extricating us out of our troubles? O LORD JESUS, too often have I been ungrateful enough to forget that Thou watchest over me with fatherly kindness; pardon my distrust of Thee, and vouchsafe to establish me in that confidence which of Thy goodness Thou hast deserved from me.

II Point—We ought to trust in JESUS in the midst of trials, both from within and from without.

If solid virtue is needed to persevere confidently in the midst of trials from without, how much more is it needed to preserve the assurance of peace in those trials from within with which our LORD allows His own to be agitated. The hour of temptation and trial is always painful; the soul, troubled in many different ways, or it may be by one great trouble, knows not what to do, or what means to take for its welfare; it seems then as though JESUS was forsaking her. He is, however, never so close to her as when she is thus troubled. It is said of St. Catharine of Sienna, that, after she had been assailed by a violent temptation from which she came out victorious, she said to our LORD: "Where wast Thou, O my adorable Spouse, whilst so many impure phantoms defiled my imagination?" The answer was: "I was at the bottom of thy heart; it was I Who inspired thee with the lively horror that thou hadst for those objects which tormented thee; it is to My help that thou owest the victory." Thus it is that the divine Master always helps us at the height of the storm; He stays as it were at the bottom of our hearts. He often rests there with delight, but His sleep is as a lion's, who is said to sleep

[1] St. Matth. viii. 26.

with his eyes open; while sleeping He still watches; He follows with attention the progress of the trial; He counts our efforts; and if we continue faithful, He will not long delay to arise and rebuke the storm, and make a great calm. Do I fully understand that we cannot hope too much in GOD? Do I preserve a lively faith in His protection, as well as confidence in His goodness, in the midst of temptations and interior darkness?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the almighty Master Who ordereth all things, permitting them or hindering them as He wills; as the bountiful Protector Who ever watcheth over us, and covers us with the shadow of His wings. Thank Him for His fatherly care of you. Humble yourselves at His feet for your continual distrust of Him. Make reparation to Him for the injury you do Him by distrusting Him. Pray Him to give you of His own Spirit of faith and trust. Promise Him never again to doubt His goodness and His care of you.

Resolution—I will oftentimes to-day make acts of trust in GOD, especially when any trial from within and from without besets me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is gracious." *Ps.* cxxxvi. 1. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." *Ps.* cxxi. 4.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXIX Contemplation

JESUS CURES ONE SICK OF THE PALSY

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—JESUS entered into Capernaum after some days. . . . And they come unto Him bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When JESUS saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but GOD only? And immediately when JESUS perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all." *St. Mark* ii. 1-12.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the house at Capernaum into which our LORD had entered; it is so full of people that no one else can get in.

3 **Prelude**—Inspire me, O LORD JESUS, with a right faith and confidence in Thy power and goodness, so that I may be

found worthy to obtain pardon for all my sins and healing for my soul.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider our adorable Master, with His wonted sweetness and majesty; the apostles; the crowd assembled in the house and at the door, pressing in to hear the Word of GOD, and to witness some miracle; the palsied man on his bed, unable to move hand or foot, the image of a soul who is the slave of sin and lukewarmness. The Scribes are there, maliciously watching JESUS. What is He about to do?

II and III Points—Consider the actions, and listen to the words.

Four persons carry a paralytic lying upon a bed; their charity and the faith of the sick man cannot fail to please the divine Master. But the immense crowd prevents their approach. Still a lively faith and an earnest charity are not easily disconcerted: those who carried the sick man climb up on the roof of the house, and let down through it the paralytic on his bed at the feet of JESUS. The divine Master is touched by their great faith. He speaks words of peace to the poor sick man: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." O LORD JESUS, I see in these words Thy great mercy and lovingkindness; nothing has as yet been asked of Thee, and Thou hast already granted a favour far greater than that which they came to seek. The words which our SAVIOUR spoke have been heard by all; but the impression that they make differs according to the disposition of the hearers: they bring a sweet peace to the heart of the sick man, they confirm the faith of some, they excite the curiosity of others. The proud Scribes are irritated by His words, and call them blasphemy. JESUS, Who reads their thoughts, reproaches them for their perverseness, and adds, with dignity, as He reproves their unbelief, "Whether is easier to

say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." At the same time a second miracle confirmed the first. "And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified GOD, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as GOD of all power and goodness, Who never refuses anything to one who manifests confidence in Him accompanied by generous efforts; as supreme Wisdom, Who derives from the malice of His enemies the principles of their confusion. Present yourself before Him, as the paralytic, striving to excite His pity by showing Him your extreme misery. Entreat Him to make you hear in the depth of your heart these comforting words: "My son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Listen also to His command, that we should arise from our state of lukewarmness, which makes us inactive in His service, and that we should promise faithfully to obey Him.

Resolution—I will not say any of my prayers or perform any action to-day negligently, and I will ask JESUS often and with much confidence to heal my soul and to keep me from spiritual dulness or sloth.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"In Thee, O LORD, have I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion." *Ps.* xxxi. 1.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXX Meditation

THE WOMAN HEALED BY TOUCHING OUR LORD'S GARMENT

"Behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind JESUS, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But JESUS turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." *St. Matth.* ix. 20-22.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the road along which JESUS is walking, followed by an immense crowd.

2 Prelude—Grant, O LORD JESUS, that, partaking of the faith, confidence and reverence of this poor woman whom Thy almighty power healed of her disease, I may like her experience its precious effects.

I Point—A humble trust obtains all from JESUS.

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." The conduct of this woman is one of the most perfect examples given us in the gospels of a lively faith accompanied by humility. She so firmly hopes to receive her cure from JESUS CHRIST, that she does not deem it necessary, in order to obtain it, to tell Him of her sickness; she is humble, and leaves to others whom she thinks worthier than herself the honour of speaking to Him and attracting His attention; she goes behind Him and reverently touches the hem of His garment. Compare now our conduct and feelings with

hers; when we desire to obtain some favour, is not our trust and confidence often very imperfect? is it a confidence which rises above the feeling of our wretchedness, and do we not often ground it more upon ourselves than upon the goodness and merits of JESUS? Do we not ordinarily care more for the kind of distinction which accompanies heavenly blessings than for the blessings themselves? O LORD JESUS, grant that, imitating this poor woman whom Thou hast healed, I may seek solely from Thee the healing of my soul, without desiring that Thy favours towards me should be known by men; teach me to receive with humility and to cherish in silence those gifts which of Thine infinite goodness Thou deignest to give me.

II Point—Everything lives in JESUS CHRIST.

As every part of a plant of balm is sweet, the root, the stem, the leaf, the flower and the fruit, so does everything in our divine Master give forth and produce life; not only did virtue flow forth from the touch of His divine hand, through His word and through the declaration of His will, but also from His very garments. The poor sick woman in the gospel understood this by a secret inspiration: she hastened to experience the effect of it, and obtained all that she hoped for. Why do I not profit as she did by such an advantage, I who have the blessedness, not of touching the garment of JESUS only, but of receiving Him so often within me? It is because I am wanting in the necessary dispositions. "JESUS, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?"[1] Many, when they pray, are like the crowd who thronged JESUS; they approach very near to Him without obtaining from Him the good things He longs to give them, because they are wanting

[1] St Mark v. 30.

in faith, in humility, and above all in trust; but those who, like the sick woman of the gospel, know how to touch Him, that is, how to address Him with a prayer that will reach Him, experience, as she did, the effects of His all-powerful virtue and infinite goodness. Ought I not to be among the number of these last, I whom JESUS has called by so many inward drawings and choice favours to the knowledge of Himself in so very especial a manner?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Master of miracles. Offer Him your love and gratitude as to a SAVIOUR full of mercy and plenteous in goodness. Humble yourself at His feet for the imperfect nature of your feelings towards Him and the coldness of your prayers. Intreat Him notwithstanding to hear and answer you, healing your soul of all its infirmities and all its sicknesses. Pray Him to glorify Himself in you through the graces He vouchsafes to bestow on you, notwithstanding the depth of your unworthiness.

Resolution—I will strive to pray with faith, humility, and confidence. I will make several acts to-day of the one of these three virtues of which I most stand in need.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my crying come unto Thee." *Psalm* cii. 1.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXI Contemplation

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, He fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And JESUS went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. . . . While He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? . . . And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. . . . But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years." *St. Mark* v. 22-42.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the roads along which JESUS walked as He went to the ruler's house, and then the house itself.

3 **Prelude**—Grant, O LORD, that, while meditating upon this miracle, and calling to mind all the wonders which Thy grace hath worked in me, the remembrance of these benefits may awaken in me a deep and lively sense of gratitude towards Thee.

I Point—Consider the persons.

JESUS is surrounded by a multitude of people, who throng Him. There is ever the same dignity, the same sweetness, the same modest gravity in His sacred Person. The afflicted father is entreating at His feet for the healing of his child. Soon afterwards the child dies in her father's house; her sorrowing family surround her: the neighbours come to share in their grief. What will be the issue of this sorrowful scene? JESUS draws near; what hope does not this inspire! O my SAVIOUR! my soul was dead in sin, and the whole company of heaven mourned over its sad state, but Thou hast heard the intercessions that have been offered for me, and Thou hast of Thy mercy restored my soul to life.

II Point—Listen to the words.

The ruler of the synagogue entreats JESUS with great fervour, and says: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live." This prayer has been heard by the divine Master; He follows Jairus, without making him any answer. As they are on the way some bring word that the child is dead; JESUS reassures the afflicted father: "Fear not, only believe." O LORD JESUS, faith and trust in Thee are then the infallible means of obtaining from Thee all that Thine infinite goodness can bestow. They reached the ruler's house, which is full of relations and friends, weeping and crying aloud. Then said JESUS unto them: "Why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Death is nought but a sleep to those who believe in JESUS, from which He will one day awaken them. Listen now to the all-powerful words He speaks to the maiden: "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise;" and straightway she arose and walked; she who was dead lived again. I also, O LORD JESUS, have heard these divine words addressed to me: when I was dead in sin Thou didst not

disdain to call me Thy child, bidding me of Thy goodness arise from the depth of sin into which I had fallen. And afterwards, when I had been cleansed from sin in Thy blood, and was in a state to understand more loving and tender words, Thou didst say to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock:"[1] and Thou didst take me and receive me to Thyself. O my LORD and SAVIOUR, grant that I may never depart from Thee again.

III Point—Consider the actions.

Consider that as soon as JESUS heard the prayer of the ruler of the synagogue, He set out at once to follow him, teaching us thereby never to delay to do whatever good is placed within our power. When JESUS had arrived at the ruler's house, He caused all the crowd to be put out. There are two mystical interpretations to be put upon this action: it is not in the midst of tumult that JESUS loves to do His marvellous works, He loves to find us out in solitude; and again, JESUS deprives the multitude of the sight of this miracle, to teach us that, although it is sometimes necessary for the edification of people in general to do good in the sight of men, it ought much oftener to be kept secret for the sake of humility. JESUS goes into the house followed only by the father and mother of the child, and by Peter, James and John, His most intimate friends. What then must have been the feelings of those parents; what the feelings of JESUS? JESUS approaches, He takes the child by her hand, He bids her arise. Recalled to life, she instantly rises and walks, JESUS delivers her to her parents, and charges them to keep her restoration to life secret.

Colloquy—Pay to your LORD the homage of adoration and gratitude with reverence and love. Thank Him particularly for the grace of conversion which He has vouchsafed to you.

[1] Song of Solomon ii. 13, 14.

Pray Him to keep you from falling back into sin. Entreat Him to bring sinners out of the miserable state in which they are living.

Resolution—I will do everything to-day in a spirit of gratitude. I will at least labour in prayer for the conversion of sinners.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O JESUS, Author and Giver of life, have mercy upon us.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXII Meditation

THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." *St. John* v. 2-4.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the pool of Bethesda, where the sheep are washed which are offered in sacrifice; the steps which surround the pool are filled with sick and infirm persons.

2 Prelude—Grant, O LORD, that I may value as I ought the fount of Thy grace with which Thou hast enriched Thy

church, and that I may know how to profit by so great a gift, and be truly thankful to Thee for such a blessing.

I Point—The water of the pool typifies the water of baptism, and the sacrament of penance.

"Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." It was a great blessing to the Jews to possess in the middle of their capital a spring the miraculous and infallible virtue of which was to restore health to the body of any who had the happiness to be the first at certain times to step into it; but as the law of grace goes far beyond the law of Moses so does the spring possessed by Christians surpass that of the synagogue; the waters of that spring were sanctified only by the sacrifices of bulls and goats which had no value in themselves; while the fount which Christians possess is filled with the Blood of JESUS CHRIST Himself, prepared as a sacred bath, in which not one person's infirmities only may be cured but those of all who desire to be cleansed in it. There are times when the waters of our fount are troubled just as there were moments when the waters of the pool of Bethesda were troubled by an angel sent from GOD. Such times are the great seasons of the Christian year, the chief fasts and festivals of the Church, on which it seems as though heaven and earth were moved to procure the conversion of sinners. But such times exhibit only a superabundance of mercy; GOD has not limited the effect of His lovingkindnesses to these times; the efficacious virtue of this fount is always ready to flow forth, and to heal all who bathe themselves in it "of whatsoever disease they have." What an inestimable benefit! Have I hitherto thought of this blessing with the gratitude it deserves? Above all, do I know how to profit by so inestimable a blessing?

II Point—The preciousness of this fount.

GOD of His infinite goodness has prepared a most pure foun-

tain for us in which our soiled souls may be restored to that holiness without which we cannot enter heaven, a fount in which our souls may find perfect health, even in the cleansing flood of the precious Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. In that fount sins may be washed away, and through it strength is given, so that we may acquire and perfect virtues. The ways of approaching this fountain are through confidence in JESUS, through the love of JESUS, through the abiding grace of JESUS, by partaking of the Body and Blood of JESUS. The very thought of such love draws from us tears of sorrow on account of our sins, and infuses joy on account of the blessings that we find in it. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation, and in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His Name."[1] It was for this fount that the royal prophet longed when he said: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O GOD."[2] Ought I not to desire to plunge into this ocean of love, this abyss of mercy, this centre of all virtues. The precious fount which flowed from Thy sacred side, O LORD JESUS, is all things to me: open it to me, I beseech Thee, vouchsafe to receive me into it, and may I always in every need draw near to it.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the source of all grace. Thank Him with the deepest and tenderest gratitude for having vouchsafed to shed His blood to heal your infirmities, and through it to give you life. Humble yourself, with singleness of mind and lowly trust, for your want of ardour in profiting by so many blessings. Pray your divine LORD and SAVIOUR to show you fully the great preciousness of these blessings. Make Him all the promises of faithfulness which love may suggest to you.

Resolution—I will to-day unite myself in all my actions

[1] Isa. xii. 3, 4. [2] Ps. xlii. 2.

with my LORD JESUS CHRIST. I will be more fervid in serving GOD, so as to prepare with greater care to receive the Holy Eucharist.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." *Isaiah* xii. 3.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXIII Meditation

JESUS CURES THE MAN WHO HAD AN INFIRMITY

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When JESUS saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. JESUS saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked." *St. John* v. 5-9.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the scene at the pool of Bethesda; the porches around it are filled with many sick and infirm people.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, vouchsafe of Thy grace to give me a hearty will and desire to serve Thee, together with perfect trust and confidence in Thee.

I Point—The want of a hearty good will is the principal obstacle to the healing of my soul.

"A certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When JESUS saw him lie, and knew that he had been now for a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" This question of the divine Master was designed to arrest the attention of the poor sick man, to awaken his confidence, so as to dispose him for the miracle which was about to be worked on his behalf. If JESUS asked us this question what should we answer? We desire without doubt to be delivered from our spiritual miseries, but are our desires productive of really great efforts on our part? This is the point that we ought to consider. There are three classes of persons who desire this blessed cure; the first class may be compared to a sick person who wishes to be delivered from his malady, but without its putting him to any pain, so that if the remedy offered to him should be a severe one, or if a painful operation should be found to be necessary, he would give up the idea of it. The second class may be compared to those sick people who are willing to submit to a certain regime and a few easy remedies, but who draw a line with regard to what shall be required of them. The third class are those who have such an earnest desire to regain health that they will submit to anything which a wise physician deems it necessary for them to suffer in order to obtain it. The first class of sick persons represents those lukewarm and cowardly souls who know their evil state, but will do nothing to be freed from it; they will never be healed. The second class represents those souls who only strive to correct their faults with a kind of half-heartedness, which makes their spiritual cure a long business and very uncertain. But the third class represents fervent souls, who refuse nothing to God, who draw down on themselves the abundance of His grace, and thus render the success of their undertakings certain. To which of these three classes do I belong? How far does my ardour and my generous feeling lead

me. Am I ready to make those sacrifices which are needful for an entire casting out from my soul of all that displeases GOD?

II Point—JESUS alone can work the cure of the soul.

"The impotent man answered JESUS, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." The cure of the soul, like that of the body, is effected by certain means which are intrusted to men to minister: GOD instructs, consoles and encourages us through the means of His creatures, and causes us to advance in the way of perfection. But creatures have the power of helping us only because GOD gives it them; should He withdraw His all-powerful help we could say with truth: "I have no one to put me into the pool." We may derive two truths from this principle; first, that all the creatures in the world could not help us if GOD did not bless their efforts, and was not Himself by His grace the very quickening principle of the help that they bring us; secondly, that if all creatures were to fail us, still if GOD be with us we have lost nothing. GOD is full of resources; He has within His power every means whereby He can help us; His powerful methods of action do not depend on any other cause than Himself; He is able when He pleases, and without the intervention of any one, to say to a soul, Arise from thy lukewarmness and weakness, and walk in the way of faithfulness and fervour. It is then, O my GOD, in truth a want of faith to lose courage when Thou refusest to bestow on me those exterior helps upon which I reckon. I never can more fully hope in Thee than when all outward help on which I leaned is removed from me, and even the possibility of regaining it apparently gone from me.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; love and thank Him for His power, His goodness and divine wisdom. Enter into the different feelings of joy, reverence and thankfulness which the sick man in the gospel experienced at

the moment when he felt himself healed after thirty-eight years of suffering. Entreat JESUS to strengthen you, by giving you sure and steadfast confidence in Himself. Give yourself wholly into His hands, praying Him to heal your soul as He wills, and by whatsoever way He wills.

Resolution—I will oftentimes during the day lift up my heart to JESUS, begging Him to give me a longing desire that my soul may be healed, and a perfect yielding up of self into His hands.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Rise . . . and walk." *St. John* v. 8.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXIV Meditation

JESUS THE LIFE OF THE RIGHTEOUS, THE RESURRECTION OF SINNERS

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON of GOD: and they that hear shall live." *St. John* v. 24, 25.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a street or a square in Jerusalem, where our LORD is surrounded by the Jews whom He is addressing.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, I believe that Thou art the

resurrection and the life,[1] increase my faith, I beseech Thee; make it a living faith, and grant that I may become worthy to possess eternally that blessed life of which Thou art the source, and which Thou dost communicate to Thine elect.

I Point—JESUS is the Life of the righteous.

"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." In order to meditate with much profit on these words, consider that He Who speaks them is Himself the Author of life. He says: "As the FATHER hath life in Himself, even so hath He given unto the SON to have life in Himself." The eternal WORD is One with GOD the FATHER, the sovereign, independent Being, from Whom all creatures derive their existence. The FATHER and the SON have life in themselves and equally communicate it, but the life of grace is communicated to us particularly by the SON, because He is appointed to be the Mediator between a guilty creature and an offended GOD. He places us in a state to receive this life of grace at the same time that He confers it upon us; let us then listen to what He vouchsafes to tell us: "He that heareth My words," *i.e.* who receives them with reverence, striving to understand them and put them into practice, and who "believeth on Him that sent Me," that is, on the truth of My divine mission, "hath everlasting life." This life is not merely promised to him, he possesses it already: the faith he has in Me, and which he makes the rule of all his conduct, is imputed unto him for righteousness; he is united to Me by sanctifying grace; and this life which I communicate to him is of that nature that shall endure eternally, if he does not lose it voluntarily by falling into mortal sin, and continuing in this hopeless state. O my SAVIOUR, I believe in Thee; I receive Thy words with reverence and joy; grant me, I beseech Thee,

[1] St. John xi. 25.

an abundant share of that most blessed life which Thou hast promised to all such as hear Thy words.

II Point—JESUS is the Resurrection of sinners.

"The dead shall hear the voice of the SON of GOD, and they that hear shall live." In order to create man in a state of innocence, GOD merely employed an act of all-powerful and sovereign goodness; but to re-establish man in that blessed state, and restore him to the life of grace, He employed all the resources of His infinite wisdom. Man's redemption is GOD'S crowning work; his restoration to a life of grace the masterpiece as it were of GOD our Redeemer. It was GOD Who for our sakes became Man, Who came upon earth to seek that which was lost, Who, entering into the empire of death, destroyed the power of death, and thus by rightful conquest rescued souls from the grave and from the death of sin, and offered them the blessing of a new birth. He calls all to receive from Him this inestimable benefit. He says: "Behold the time cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON of GOD, and they that hear shall live." Happy are they who do not harden their hearts against His voice; for, though He is all-powerful to revive and sustain a teachable, willing soul, He will by no means force a man's rebellious will, which is left free to obey Him or to resist Him. What a consoling promise; what a divine assurance is contained in the words: "And they that hear shall live." It is a promise which is given to all who will receive the word of salvation. If the fate of sinners interests me, if the glory of JESUS touches me, with what zeal ought I not to join in the designs of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our good Master, by contributing all my strength and power to make Him known and loved by all. O LORD JESUS, suffer me not to remain lukewarm and cold with regard to the souls of my brethren; fill me with Thine own spirit, and deign to make use of me, so that by the help of Thy grace I may be

enabled to lead souls who are dead in sin to hear Thy voice.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the supreme Author of life. Make lively acts of gratitude to Him for the goodness with which He calls all sinners, and yourself in particular, to receive from Him this precious life. Entreat His mercy for the wretched souls who obstinately refuse to know Him. Beg Him to fill you with His grace, so that you may henceforth live by Him alone.

Resolution—I will frequently lift up my heart to JESUS throughout the day, to ask Him for life, and entreat Him to have mercy upon sinners. I will do everything in union with Him in order to receive abundantly that life of which He is the source.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." *St. John* v. 24.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXV Meditation

THE INNER LAW WHICH GUIDED THE JUDGMENTS AND ACTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST

"I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the FATHER which hath sent Me." *St. John* v. 30.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a street or square in Jerusa-

lem, where our LORD is surrounded by the Jews to whom He is speaking.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, always to form my judgments and regulate my actions according to Thine, that, after Thy example, I may in all things do not mine own will, but the will of my FATHER Which is in heaven.

I **Point**—The rule which regulated the judgments of JESUS CHRIST.

"As I hear I judge, and My judgment is just." These words teach us the rule by which our LORD JESUS CHRIST formed His judgments, and also what our rule should be. We judge of matters too often by the outward appearance; JESUS, on the contrary, judged of them by the interior witness of the HOLY SPIRIT. JESUS having the spirit of perfect recollectedness, knew how to retreat within Himself, to hold secret communion with His FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, notwithstanding the number and the distracting character of His occupations, and from their secret communing emanated all His judgments. It was indeed impossible that His sacred humanity, united as it was to His divinity, should be otherwise than continually united with so intimate a presence; but He was not the less exact in using all the means which are necessary for other men, in order to establish and keep Himself in the spirit of recollectedness; for He willed both to give men the example as well as to merit this grace for them. How wisely should we judge of all things if we were faithful in imitating JESUS, forming like Him in the midst of our hearts a sanctuary into which we might often retire to take counsel with GOD before deciding on anything ourselves! Then would the goods of this world, the pleasures of this life, be to us just what they are; we should discover their nothingness, that they are but things which pass away, a superficial shortlived pleasure; the empty satisfactions of pride

and self-love would be like smoke in our eyes, whilst, on the contrary, the marks of the cross, contradictions, humiliations, and sufferings would become pleasant to us, for we should see them in the light of bringing those inestimable blessings which they confer on faithful souls. O LORD JESUS, give me grace to judge of and to appreciate all things by this most wise rule. Thus did the saints judge of all things, and thus shall I judge of them at the hour of my death. Suffer me not, O my SAVIOUR, to wait until my last moments to be enlightened by Thee, to walk in Thy light, and to come to Thee for guidance and wisdom.

II Point—The rule which directed the actions of JESUS CHRIST.

"I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the FATHER, Which hath sent Me." The mind of JESUS, our divine Pattern, was always occupied with the presence of His FATHER and filled with Him as the divine object of all His affections. The will is regulated by the mind, actions are the result of the will; all the actions of the adorable SON were done for the love of His FATHER and in conformity with His most holy will. Let us strive to penetrate the mind of JESUS, and study there the sacred operations of the SPIRIT by Which He was moved. This SPIRIT, the bond of love between the FATHER and the SON, manifested inwardly to JESUS the will of the FATHER, and JESUS, ever attentive and open to the slightest impressions, faithfully carried out in practice every inspiration of grace. A Christian soul, a soul prevented by the grace of GOD, ought to follow out every impression, not only of nature but of grace, that it receives from Him. It is very difficult for a soul that is given up to self-love and dissipated by it to make out clearly these divine impressions and drawings of the grace of GOD, but to the soul who gives itself to the practice of recollectedness and interior mortification, the SPIRIT of GOD, Which is a SPIRIT of goodness, is not slow in manifesting His presence. He

enlightens the faithful soul, He directs it, He sustains it, He constantly renews its ardour, and by degrees raises it into conformity with JESUS. Ought I not to desire these precious blessings? Shall I continue to neglect the means that GOD has put within my power in order to procure them?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the divine Pattern of all virtues, the Master of the interior life of the soul. Humble yourself at His feet for the negligences which have hindered your advance in this blessed life. Pray for His help; promise courageously to take every means His goodness offers you to enable you to co-operate with His grace, and constrain the HOLY SPIRIT to abide within you.

Resolution—I will try to-day to practise an interior spirit of recollectedness, and I will chiefly strive against the inclinations which lead me the most often to resist GOD's grace.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"I will hearken what the LORD GOD will say concerning (in) me." *Ps.* lxxxv. 8.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXVI Meditation

TRUE LIFE FOUND IN JESUS ALONE

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of GOD in you. I am come in My FATHER's Name,

and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. . . . How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from GOD only?" *St. John* v. 39-44.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself a street or square in Jerusalem, where our LORD is surrounded by the Jews to whom He is speaking.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, adorable Author of the life which Thou dost communicate to pure and humble souls, grant that I may seek Thee with an earnest upright heart, and that having found Thee I may never again separate myself from Thee.

I Point—Eternal life is only obtained by a practical faith in JESUS.

Our LORD said to the Jews: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." The Jews, though they were so carnal, still desired salvation, they sinned through blindness and not through indifference. The divine Master said: "The Scriptures testify of Me." Why then did they not recognize Him? JESUS Himself tells us the reason: "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." A perverse will leads the mind astray; a person readily blinds himself to what he is afraid to see, and hence come erroneous judgments, and a false and insincere state of conscience. The Jews desired life eternal, but since in order to find it, it appeared to them too difficult and grievous to have to renounce the goods of this life, they would not seek it at the hand of a MESSIAH Who was humble and poor, and who led a mortified life. Truly their folly was great, but is mine less so, I who desire to reach heaven without following the steps of the humble and suffering JESUS? The Jews would not recognize Him as the promised MESSIAH; my heart does not refuse Him this glorious title: I

adore Him as the SAVIOUR of my soul, but do I not too often forget that He is the Captain under Whom I have promised to fight? O my LORD, put an end to this inconsistency in my life: I desire to co-operate with Thy grace, and to perfect my faith by making it practical.

II Point—Humility is necessary in order to have faith in JESUS.

"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" It was pride that blinded the Jews and rendered them incapable of knowing JESUS; it is this deplorable condition which even now hinders so many Christians from openly declaring themselves on His side and from walking closely after Him. When pride leads us to betray our consciences for fear of being blamed by men it is called human respect. When it makes us expose our innocence to danger, when it makes us run the risk of yielding to temptation for the sake of gratifying a frivolous desire of showing ourselves off and being admired, it is called "vanity." When it makes us do good for the sake of gaining the esteem and praise of men it is called ostentation. It is called self-love when, by attaching us to our own ideas and our self-willed fancies, it hinders us from acknowledging our faults, and prevents our accepting the humiliations which are sent to us by JESUS in order to conform us to His likeness. In these and the like ways pride opposes itself to the effects which faith ought to produce, weakens the spirit of JESUS CHRIST in the soul, and introduces instead the spirit of the world, which is His mortal enemy. Am I safely protected against these dangerous assaults of pride? Am I not open to the reproach of my divine Master through yielding to its evil influence? "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." O my SAVIOUR, to whom shall I go if I depart from Thee? "Thou hast the words of eternal life."[1] I will not be unfaithful

[1] St. John vi. 68.

to Thee; give me Thy love, fill me with Thy SPIRIT, that I may cling to Thee now and to all eternity.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD as your SAVIOUR, your Master, and the Light of your true life. Pray Him to make you understand that you can only attain to life eternal by clinging to Him. Humble yourself at His feet for all your unfaithfulness. Pray for all weak souls who are not yet established in sincere humility. Ask Him to give you all the help and grace you need.

Resolution—I will unite myself to JESUS to-day by frequent acts of faith and love. I will not heed the opinion of the world in doing anything which I know to be right.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *St. John* xi. 25.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXVII Contemplation

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER AT THE FEET OF JESUS

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"And one of the Pharisees desired Him that he would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that JESUS sat at meat

in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. . . . And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." *St. Luke* vii. 36-48.

2 Prelude—Picture to yourself the Pharisee's house; a great many guests are sitting with JESUS at the table.

3 Prelude—Grant, O my SAVIOUR, that, imitating the love and contrition of this penitent woman, I may like her be found worthy to find forgiveness for my numberless sins and offences.

I Point—Consider the persons.

JESUS was there, full of sweetness and gentleness, grave and dignified in His bearing. Prostrate at His feet is the penitent woman, filled with no other thoughts than those of love for Him and grief on account of her sins. There is the Pharisee watching our LORD; there are all the guests, who also have observed the Magdalen, and wait to hear what our divine SAVIOUR will say concerning her.

II Point—Listen to the words.

Consider the silent but eloquent utterance of the mind of the Magdalen, which JESUS hears and understands. The words which the Pharisee spoke secretly: "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner:" the Pharisee was mistaken, she is not now hardened in sin, she is deeply penitent. JESUS, Who knew this, speaks to him who had judged so rashly: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Then saith he: "Master, say on:" and the whole assembly listen attentively. Our Blessed LORD continues: "A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the

other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" The Magdalen has already seized on the meaning of this parable; she understands that the more she is forgiven the more she must love. Simon, who is less ready to understand, does not see the consequence of the answer which he is about to make: "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast rightly judged," said JESUS; and, turning towards the Magdalen, continued, saying unto Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." Then, speaking to the woman, He said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee:" "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

III Point—Consider the actions.

Consider the courageous conduct of the Magdalen; she exposes herself freely to every humiliation, and makes her acts of penitence as public as her evil deeds had been in times past. Behold the flood of tears with which she bathes the feet of the divine Master; the kisses with which she covers them; the lavish way in which she pours out the precious ointment upon Him in order to do Him honour, and the pardon which JESUS bestows upon her.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, full of mercy and goodness. Offer Him the love and contrition which the Magdalen manifested, and thank Him for the favours which He bestowed upon this noted penitent. Entreat

Him to fill you with the same ardent love for Himself, the same hatred of sin which she had. Make an earnest act of true contrition for all the sins that you have committed. Promise Him that you will imitate the Magdalen in making amends for your past conduct by a never-failing fervour and faithfulness, and ask Him to give you grace to keep your promise.

Resolution—I will often to-day fall down in spirit at the feet of JESUS, and ask of Him pardon for my sins and the gift of perfect contrition. I will to-day in a spirit of penitence bear everything that happens which may grieve me and humiliate me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." *St. Luke* vii. 47.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXVIII Meditation

LOVE IN REPARATION FOR SIN

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." *St. Luke* vii. 47.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the Pharisee's house, and our Blessed LORD seated at table, with St. Mary Magdalene at His feet.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, vouchsafe to kindle within my

heart the fire of Thy pure love, so that that heavenly flame may purify my soul from all its stains, and that I may in love and devotion towards Thee make amends for all the sins that I have so grievously committed against Thee.

I Point—Love is the most perfect way in which amends can be made for the sins which we have committed.

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." We cannot meditate too much upon these words which our divine Master uttered on behalf of Mary Magdalen and all true penitents, and which contain such salutary instructions: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." Consider that the multitude of our offences is no hindrance to our finding pardon, if much love takes the place of long-continued unfaithfulness; and more than this, GOD, Whose most precious attributes are goodness and mercy, glories in making His grace to abound where sin had before abounded, manifesting by this divine outpouring both His power and His love. God is love: it is by love that we must draw near to Him again when we have had the misfortune of separating ourselves from Him through sin. Consider indeed that love contains every disposition which could incline GOD to look favourably upon a sinner. Hatred of sin, deep grief for those sins which she had committed, firm resolution to make amends for the past, and to avoid them for the future at any price or sacrifice; lively faith, unbounded trust; all these virtues shone forth in St. Mary Magdalene: let us imitate her, and if like her we love much, like her we shall receive the forgiveness of many sins. With what ardour ought I not to embrace this sweet means of obtaining pardon, which my numberless offences have made so necessary for me. O LORD, I desire to love Thee; do Thou help my weakness; give me Thy love and Thy grace, and I will love Thee with all my heart and with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength.

II Point—The pardon that GOD gives us for our sins should incline us to love Him more and more.

If love is a necessary disposition in order to obtain pardon for our numberless sins, that pardon is itself the most constraining motive that we can have for loving our dear LORD more and more. The fire of divine love which is the beginning of our justification should daily and hourly increase and grow in our souls. It ought, after procuring our reconciliation, to ensure our perseverance, by continuing that hatred of sin which it has excited in our hearts. After drawing down abundant grace upon our souls, it ought to make them advance in the practice of every virtue. In all this the Magdalen is our pattern. Justified by the love and pity of JESUS, she burns with still more ardent love for her divine SAVIOUR; all her thoughts, her affections, her actions are directed to His service alone and to His glory; she follows Him to Calvary; after His death she seeks Him in the sepulchre; and when at last He quits the earth to ascend to heaven, she consecrates the rest of her life to the austerities of penitence and the practice of the most sublime virtues. Let me then consider, has the mercy of JESUS been less shown towards me than towards Saint Mary Magdalen? If my sins have been less, still have I not made myself more inexcusable by making a misuse of the numberless graces which St. Mary Magdalen did not receive, but which I have? Has not the goodness of GOD been signally shown towards me as it was towards her; and ought I to yield to her in love and gratitude? How different is our conduct to that of the saints? I desire, O GOD, to become less unworthy of all Thy goodness; sustain me by Thy grace.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, full of mercy and goodness. Offer Him the love and contrition which the Magdalen manifested, and thank Him for the favours which He bestowed upon this noted penitent. Entreat

Him to fill you with the same ardent love for Himself and the same hatred for sin which she had. Make an earnest act of true contrition for all the sins that you have committed. Promise Him that you will imitate the Magdalen in making amends for your past conduct by a never-failing fervour and faithfulness, and ask of Him grace to keep your promise.

Resolution—I will make many acts of love to GOD during this day, and do all my actions from motives of love.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—LORD, give me Thy love and Thy grace, and it sufficeth me.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XXXIX Meditation

JESUS CONFOUNDS THE MALICE OF HIS ENEMIES

"And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn-fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? . . . And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him." *St. Luke* vi. 1-7.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the fields through which JESUS passed with His disciples, and then the synagogue.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, to profit by the example of wisdom, patience, sweetness and firmness which Thou hast given me in Thy conduct towards Thine enemies.

I **Point**—Consider the unjust animosity of the enemies of JESUS.

We have often already had occasion, while meditating on our LORD'S actions, to remark on the animosity which the Pharisees showed Him; they now accuse Him in the person of His disciples of breaking the sabbath, because, being pressed by hunger, they had plucked a few ears of corn, and had rubbed them in their hands and eaten them, an action which was indeed positively allowed by the law. They watch Him maliciously, to cast if possible upon His works of power and goodness even the poison of calumny which fills their wicked hearts. What feeling was it that made them try so hard to find out an apparent error of conduct in JESUS, and made them so angry because they could discover no real wrong in Him? It was hatred; but what was the motive for this hatred? This is what we have accurately to examine, for it is of the greatest importance. Consider then: the Pharisees were proud men, who had gained public esteem for themselves by a fastidious outward show of fidelity to the smallest observances of the law; but whilst they deceived the people by a certain outward strictness and pretended virtue, their hearts were full of ambition, selfishness and hardness; they imposed hard obligations upon others, from which they dispensed themselves; they enriched themselves by spoiling the widow and the orphan; they refused to support their aged parents under the pretext that it was enough to remember them in prayer; they were, in a word, unworthy hypocrites, whose false, hard, intolerant spirit was completely opposed to the just, gentle, merciful spirit of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He had told them plainly more than once what He thought of their making a parade of their virtues; His instruc-

tions, His miracles, and His good deeds began to attract the esteem and love of the people, and the proud rulers of the nation trembled at seeing His gentle authority taking the place of their unjust tyranny. Hence their envenomed hatred of His divine Person. If they had been upright, they would have recognised in Him the promised MESSIAH, and, gladly resigning to Him the sovereign power, would have counted themselves happy to have ranged themselves with the people under His lawful and most gentle dominion. But equitable conduct is never compatible with pride and ambition; and therefore could not find a place in the heart of the Pharisees. O LORD JESUS, how fitting are these considerations to inspire me with the greatest horror of these great faults, make me search into the innermost recesses of my heart, in order to discover and extirpate their smallest roots.

II Point—Consider with what wisdom, sweetness and dignity JESUS confounds His enemies.

Consider the manner in which our adorable Master rejects the calumnious imputations brought against Him. He justifies His apostles by an example derived from Holy Scripture and by the sanction of His own divine authority. He said: "Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; how he went into the house of GOD, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? And He said unto them, That the Son of Man is LORD also of the sabbath." When His enemies watched Him to see if He would heal a poor cripple on the sabbath day, in order to accuse Him, He addressed them and asked them whether it was lawful to do good on that day: they remained silent, but He established the righteousness of His cause by a miracle of infinite mercy, a miracle which cost Him but a single word, and thus left no open-

ing for any criticism. Thus it is that JESUS triumphs over His enemies, putting them to silence by conduct worthy both of the majesty of GOD and the mercy and goodness of a SAVIOUR. If these enemies of our LORD had only been less obstinate in their voluntary blindness, if they had but chosen to profit by the wonders our LORD multiplied before their eyes in order to enlighten them, they would then have experienced the effects of His merciful power upon themselves; and their hearts, more withered than the man's hand which JESUS healed, would have been restored by Him to perfect health. O my LORD and SAVIOUR, grant me this grace which the Pharisees rejected; make me learn of Thee how to triumph over those who are ill-disposed towards me, by being always considerate and gentle towards them in well-doing, braving the censures of a blind world, and acting for Thee alone.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST as the supreme Wisdom, Who with a single word can, when He pleases, confound the most deep-laid malice; as infinite Goodness, Whom none can hinder from doing good to those who run to Him for protection. Pray Him to fill you with His spirit, and to make you understand His divine example. Renew your vows of continual allegiance to so good a Master. Pray for those who in these days are so miserably blind as obstinately to misunderstand Him, and persecute Him in His religion and His ministers.

Resolution—I will to-day make many acts of humility and charity in order to prove that I belong to JESUS.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—JESUS, meek and humble, conform my life to Thine.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XL Meditation

THE SWEETNESS AND GOODNESS OF JESUS

"But when JESUS knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold My servant, Whom I have chosen; My beloved, in Whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." *St. Matth.* xii. 15-20.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the seashore, whither a great multitude has followed JESUS.

2 **Prelude**—Teach me, O loving Master, to profit by Thine infinite sweetness by wholly trusting in Thee, and to follow the example of Thine unchangeable gentleness.

I **Point**—The gentleness of JESUS invites our confidence.

We do not sufficiently realize the dispositions of the mind of JESUS towards those who seek Him; His justice and His holiness overwhelm our misery; we forget too easily that He is full of mercy, long-suffering, and plenteous in goodness and truth. Consider JESUS in the midst of this great crowd of people, who have come together from all parts to see Him and to hear Him; the greater part are attracted, not so much by the desire of learning of Him the things concerning their salvation, as from the hope of profiting by His miracles, or at least of witnessing them; that is to say, they are drawn to Him either by a personal interest in Him, or by that curiosity which loves to see mar-

vellous things; imperfect motives no doubt, and certainly little worthy of JESUS, but notwithstanding they content our good Master, and He grants to these poor people all that they ask of Him. If, after considering the dispositions of their hearts, we pass on to their outward behaviour, we shall find it of a corresponding character, rough and undisciplined. St. Luke relates that they pressed upon and thronged our Blessed LORD to touch Him, so that they might be healed; and our good Master, as though the rudeness and incivility of their manners had in no way inconvenienced Him, healed them, taught them the things concerning their salvation, and tenderly loved them. Shall we not trust in JESUS CHRIST after such touching proofs of His goodness? If He so graciously received those rough unmannered people who came to Him for nothing except to solicit temporal blessings from Him, will He not much more be gracious to those who seek Him from motives of faith, love, and zeal for His glory?

II Point—We ought to imitate the gentleness of JESUS.

The goodness of our adorable Master ought not only to inspire our hearts with tender confidence in Him, but ought also to stir us up to imitate His example; we must learn with JESUS to bear with the weak and faltering, and to rise above a feeling of sensitiveness with regard to the precedence and the respect which we think others ought to pay us; we must, like Him, look at our neighbour from the most favourable point of view, shutting our eyes with an indulgent charity to all that may seem to us to be defective in him, loving him sincerely, and proving to him our cordiality by our good will and kindness towards him. Are these signs of true gentleness to be found in me? Do I take care to conform myself to the likeness of my adorable Pattern by practising this precious virtue?

Colloquy—Adore the goodness, gentleness, and mercy of

your LORD JESUS CHRIST, the blessed effects of which we have so often experienced. Tell Him with entire confidence of all the miseries of your soul. Entreat Him to conform your life to His in the sweetness and gentleness which He exhibited towards all men. Pray Him to pardon the faults you have committed with respect to those precious virtues. Promise Him to strive to acquire those virtues by the help of His grace.

Resolution—I will strive to practise gentleness, forbearance and kindness towards those with whom I live.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is gracious." *Ps.* cxviii. 1.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLI Meditation

JESUS CHOOSES HIS APOSTLES

"JESUS went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to GOD. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles." *St. Luke* vi. 12, 13.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain upon which JESUS prayed all night, and afterward assembled His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—Teach me, O my divine Master, like Thee, to seek in prayer the light that I need; help me now to search into the motives which moved Thee to choose Thy apostles,

that they might be associated with Thee, and labour with Thee in the establishment of Thy church.

I Point—Why JESUS passed the night in prayer before choosing His apostles.

"He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer." Our divine Master was about to make an important choice. He was going to raise some men to the highest conceivable dignity; to intrust them with powers that had not been bestowed even on angels, in one sense to associate them with Himself in the redemption of the world. JESUS prepares to do this by holding communion with His FATHER, teaching us by this that prayer is the means to which we should have recourse in any important matter that we undertake, in order that we may be guided in it rightly, and may not come rashly to any decision. Truly, if many people act imprudently, it is because they do not reflect before they act, or because they act from purely human motives. If I wish to follow JESUS I must not imitate them, but I must like Him ask counsel of the Father of light. Am I always faithful in making use of this most necessary precaution?

II Point—Consider why JESUS chose His apostles.

JESUS chose twelve of His disciples, in order to attach them to Himself in a particular manner, and make them partakers of His labours, and hand down through them the gifts of the apostolate. Why did He do this? Why did He confide these sublime functions to creatures? Could He not by Himself have finished and perfected the work that He had begun? Without doubt He could have done so, but He willed that it should be otherwise in the order of His providence; He willed that not only human nature consecrated in His divine Person should minister to the redemption of the world, but also that men of a single mind, our brethren, like ourselves, should co-

operate with Him in the accomplishment of His designs; that they should be towards us the depositaries of His power and authority, in order to awaken greater confidence in us towards Himself, and to make the means of salvation which He offers us the more easy by being adapted to our nature. It is not to angels that He has given the charge over us, to teach us, guide us, reprove us, absolve us; but to men, subject to like passions as we are, and therefore the less to be feared. How thankful ought we to be for this infinite goodness of our LORD, and with what loving fidelity ought we not to profit by His condescension to us! Am I faithful in fulfilling this double duty?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD as Wisdom and infinite Goodness. Pray Him to grant you the gifts of this Christian prudence, of which He gives us such wonderful examples. Thank Him for having given us pastors and teachers like ourselves, and for having confided to them all His divine power for our happiness and salvation. Entreat Him to attach us more and more in heart and mind to the holy catholic and apostolic church, and to inspire us with reverence and a teachable spirit towards the ministers of His gospel.

Resolution—I will apply myself to-day to practise recollectedness, and to the spirit of prayer. I will strive more and more to see JESUS CHRIST in His ministers.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"With the LORD there is mercy." *Ps.* cxxx. 7.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLII Meditation

THE FIRST BEATITUDE: A HUMBLE SPIRIT

"JESUS seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 1-3.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain upon which JESUS sat teaching His disciples, and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—Vouchsafe, O LORD, to fill my heart with Thy HOLY SPIRIT, in order that I may understand the divine truths on which I am about to meditate.

I **Point**—In what does a humble spirit consist.

The first beatitude is promised to three classes of persons. First, to those who voluntarily renounce for the love of GOD all that they possess in the world, and have bound themselves to follow JESUS in His poverty as closely as possible. Secondly, to those whom GOD has placed in a humble position in society, and who love their estate from religious principles, uniting all the privations, humiliations and inconveniences to which they are subject, to the poverty of JESUS. Thirdly and lastly, to those who have received from GOD the good things of this life; who use them in a holy way, bestow much on the poor, and do not love or set their hearts upon these things. The first walk in the securest and most perfect way. The second hold a safe course, freed from many great temptations. The third are exposed to great dangers and great hindrances; for it is difficult

for those who have riches always to look upon them as a sacred trust of which they must one day give an account, to use them as not abusing them, and to be ready to give them up without a murmur, if the LORD so wills. Still, by GOD'S grace, this class can practise detachment from the world as perfectly as the others; they can be poor in spirit even in the midst of riches. Whatever my condition may be, I ought to bless and praise GOD, Who has placed salvation and the means of leading the highest life on earth within my reach, and the reach of all men. O LORD JESUS, fill me with Thine own spirit; grant that, entering perfectly into Thy designs, I may use the means that Thou hast provided me for my sanctification.

II Point—The rewards promised to the poor in spirit.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." JESUS said: "Blessed are the poor;" the world on the contrary exclaims: "Blessed are the rich!" Why these opposite views? It is because the world looks only at things with regard to this present life, while JESUS CHRIST wills that we should carry our thoughts beyond the short interval of our sojourn here to the time of our entrance into our heavenly country! The world says: Blessed are the rich, because they enjoy the pleasant things and the comforts of this life; JESUS says: "Blessed are the poor: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Heavenly riches are to be the reward of a short period of privation, and this recompense is so assured to the really poor that JESUS did not say: The kingdom of heaven will be theirs, but is theirs, to show that they have already the full title to it, and that they have only to enter into it to enjoy it. If I am alive to my own interests, how ought this hope to encourage me to strive after so priceless a reward! But this is not the only motive that ought to incite me, according to my state of life, to practise poverty of spirit; this virtue is the one of all others that brings us nearest to the example of our divine

Pattern, and consequently fits us to receive communications from Him. O LORD JESUS, can I neglect to use so good a means of conforming my life to Thy spirit and Thy mind? From this moment, O my SAVIOUR, by the help of Thy grace, I understand the necessity of practising poverty of spirit, and I resolve from henceforth to practise it.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your Master and your Teacher. Tell Him that all your happiness and your glory consists in hearing Him and obeying Him. Humble yourself if at any time it happens to you to esteem too highly the false possessions which the world gives you. Pray JESUS to fill you with His spirit, to give you a clear and practical understanding of His heavenly doctrine, and to bless the resolution that you have now made before Him of practising poverty of spirit, according to your state of life and the intentions that in His providence He has for you.

Resolution—I will often to-day remember that all I possess is lent me by GOD, and that I shall have to give a strict account for the use that I have made of all His gifts. I will in the presence of my SAVIOUR ask myself whether my almsdeeds are proportioned to my means, and whether I have made a right and good use of the means with which GOD has blessed me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—JESUS, FATHER of the poor, have mercy upon us. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 3.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLIII Meditation

SECOND BEATITUDE: THE BLESSINGS OF AFFLICTION

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." *St. Matth.* v. 4.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS sat teaching His disciples, and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me, O LORD JESUS, by the help of Thy HOLY SPIRIT, rightly to understand those words of Thine which are so little known by many Christians.

I **Point**—Who are those to whom the second beatitude is promised?

"Blessed are they that mourn." This maxim is in such direct opposition to our natural inclinations that the world is scandalized by it, and rejects it. Christians who do not live up to their light share the world's opinion on this point, and even those who make an open profession of piety, if they admit it in theory, disregard it in practice. Let us endeavour not to share an illusion so contrary to the true spirit of Christianity, and to this end let us seek to understand well what those tears are which our LORD declares blessed. First, these tears are those of sincere repentance. Blessed are they who wash away the stains of sin from their souls in bitter tears of penitence, they shall be comforted by the remission of those sins which cause them such sorrow. Secondly, this beatitude belongs especially to those suffering ones who patiently bear the pains

and trials which are sent to them in this life. They are comforted by the peace and joy the HOLY SPIRIT communicates even now to the righteous, and by all the joys of heaven hereafter. Lastly, "Blessed are they that mourn" for the outrages done to our LORD and for the troubles of the church, they shall be comforted in the eternal abode of heaven by witnessing the infinite glory of GOD and the final triumph of His church. O my GOD and my Master! I now understand that "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy:"[1] give me grace, I beseech Thee, to sanctify all the tears and the griefs that it pleases Thee that I should shed.

II Point—JESUS CHRIST and His saints had affliction for their earthly lot.

JESUS confirmed the doctrine which He preached by His own example and that of all His saints. The life of our adorable SAVIOUR was one series of crosses, privations, and sufferings. He felt all the bitterness of the insults offered to His divine majesty, and constant sorrow over the many souls for whom He foresaw that His blood would be shed in vain. Mary, His blessed Mother, was of all saints made most like Him through suffering; the sharp sword of His Passion pierced through her own pure soul, and she was so greatly afflicted that her grief was like "the waters which cover the sea."[2] When our LORD told His apostles what in GOD'S providence was reserved for them in this life, He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful."[3] The saints of every age have suffered in this world; why should I be astonished if this land of exile is a valley of tears for me as it was for them? on the contrary, if anything ought to alarm me, it should be having nothing to suffer, because then I have no right to the blessing promised to those who mourn.

[1] Ps. cxxvi. 6. [2] Isa. xi. 9. [3] St. John xvi. 20.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Author of truth. Give Him thanks from your inmost heart for the holiness of His doctrine. Beseech Him to let it enter even into your soul; and renounce for ever the spirit of the children of this world. Thank Him for all the causes for affliction which you have hitherto had, and for the tears of contrition which He has given you grace to shed. Entreat Him to pardon all your want of faith in seasons of trial. Promise for the future to strive to show yourself more worthy of being called His disciple. Implore the assistance of His grace.

Resolution—I will bear patiently any sorrow that GOD may see fit to send me to-day; I will often retire within myself to think of the troubles of the church, and the offences committed against GOD, and my own sins.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." *St. Matth.* v. 5.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLIV Meditation

THIRD BEATITUDE: MEEKNESS

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." *St. Matth.* v. 5.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain upon which JESUS sat teaching His disciples, and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—O most sweet JESUS, Who willest that Thy disciples should ever strive to imitate Thy unvarying meekness, grant me grace to gain from this meditation the practical knowledge and the love of this precious grace.

I **Point**—The advantages of meekness.

Meekness is a virtue which keeps a person from giving offence, and prevents him from being offended at anything. Its practice supposes many spiritual combats, since it excludes all bitterness, all impatience, all exaction, all susceptibility; but when once it is established in the soul, the blessed fruits that it produces make abundant amends for the pain it costs to acquire it. It makes us bear the trials that are sent from GOD, as well as those that arise from our neighbours' faults and our own shortcomings, calmly and peacefully; our soul is kept by it in a perfect evenness of temper; and every obstacle to the working of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT within us is removed. If we have this precious virtue within us, it imparts to all our words and actions a sweetness that gains all hearts, drawing them to esteem and love piety and godly living. GOD, in His infinitely gentle way of dealing with us, inclines towards a soul in which He perceives this endeavour to resemble Himself. He fills it with His own mind and spirit, and dwells for ever in the midst of it. With what zeal and ardour ought I not to apply myself to acquire so desirable a virtue!

II **Point**—We can only find perfect meekness in JESUS CHRIST.

Our hearts are by nature inclined to evil and opposed to the acquisition of every virtue. True Christian meekness, that virtue which is produced not by indolence and weakness of character, but by the generous efforts of a heart bent on conquering self and preserving its peace in the midst of contradictions and trials, is not natural to us; but GOD of His infinite goodness has pro-

[illegible] by the attainment [illegible]. Virtue [illegible] the prime sanctuary of all [illegible] desires nothing so much [illegible] as to see [illegible] in our souls. Let us [illegible] it necessary to remain without the [illegible] while we have it within our reach. [illegible] as to reject [illegible] when Thou dost invite me [illegible] this most precious grace of [illegible].

[illegible]—[illegible] as the divine [illegible]. Thank Him for His goodness in permitting [illegible] to seek to acquire these virtues. [illegible]. Promise to do all in your power [illegible] by making on your part [illegible] to acquire this virtue.

[illegible]—I will meekly bear with the importunities [illegible] and be patient under trials.

[illegible].

[illegible]—"Jesus meek and lowly in heart," [illegible]. St. Matt. xi. 29. "Blessed are [illegible]. St. Matt. v. 5.

[illegible].

[illegible] on the Meditation.

XLV Meditation

FOURTH BEATITUDE: HOLY DESIRES

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." *St. Matth.* v. 6.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS sat teaching His disciples.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, grant that my soul may long with ardent desire for Thy love, and for the virtues with which Thou wouldest see it adorned, so that, aspiring unceasingly towards Thee, I may draw Thee to myself, unite myself wholly to Thee, and never again be separated from Thee.

I Point—Holy desires are a sign that a soul is well-pleasing to GOD.

The pleasures of this world, when seen from afar, appear sweet and enticing, but when viewed nearer, their hollowness is soon experienced; and the more we indulge in them, the more does their very source become poisoned by disgust at them. It is not the same with the pure enjoyment of virtue; the soul that has once tasted it desires to taste it unceasingly; one step made in the way of perfection will create the wish to make ten; the more the soul advances in acquiring virtue the more she desires to advance; it is an intense hunger and thirst that nothing can satisfy, because the more she practises holiness the more lovely she finds it; and the more lovely it becomes to her the more constantly she desires to practise it. Since the service of GOD, then, is so delightful, how is it that so few give themselves up to it with ardour and perseverance? It is

because the manna that it contains is hidden from sinful and lukewarm souls. Holy desires come from the SPIRIT of GOD; the more intimate and habitual is the presence of this SPIRIT of life in the soul, the more ardent and sustained are the affections with which He inspires her. If I experience the presence of these holy desires after perfection, I ought to bless and thank GOD, and work faithfully with the grace He gives me; but if I have no such desires, then I must strive earnestly, by fervent prayer and strenuous efforts, to draw down the HOLY SPIRIT upon me.

II Point—The advantages of holy desires.

Solomon says: "I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon GOD, and the spirit of wisdom came to me: . . . all good things together came to me with her, and innumerable riches in her hands."[1] We can say the same of holy desires; a soul filled with them is in a certain sense all-powerful with JESUS, Who does not know how to refuse her prayers. The angel said to Daniel: "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee."[2] The same words are addressed to every soul who longs after heavenly things; even though she does not pray, still her desires are that voice of the Spirit which cries unceasingly, "Abba, Father:"[3] and GOD accepts the preparation of the heart. Let us then meditate carefully on these words: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Even in this life they will draw down upon themselves an abundance of heavenly treasures which will fill them with virtue, and make them worthy in the sight of GOD; but, above all, their desires will be so perfectly satisfied in heaven that they will then taste such delights as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. I renounce, O GOD, from henceforth all lukewarmness, all negligence, and all sloth; with Thy help I will strive

[1] Wisdom vii. 7-11. [2] Dan. ix. 23. [3] Galat. iv. 6.

unceasingly to increase my longing desires for Thy love, and for the righteousness which Thou dost bestow upon Thy true children.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as righteousness itself, as the Author of righteousness in all the saints. Pray Him, by the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT, to excite within you such a vehement desire after holiness, as will make you pleasing in His sight. Acknowledge yourself to be unworthy of this grace, on account of your numerous acts of unfaithfulness, and the wilful indifference in which you have lived so long; nevertheless entreat Him with entire confidence to give you such a desire for the sake of His own merits.

Resolution—I will often during the day raise my heart to GOD, and ask Him to give me that hunger and thirst after righteousness which He has pronounced to be blessed. I will correspond with the grace bestowed upon me; for faithfulness increases holy desires.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." *St. Matth.* v. 6.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLVI Meditation

FIFTH BEATITUDE: MERCY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." *St. Matth.* v. 7.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS sat teaching His disciples; and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, teach me, I pray Thee, that I may learn from Thee that mercy which is the characteristic and cherished virtue of all those who are Thy faithful disciples.

I **Point**—Love of JESUS and zeal for His glory ought to move us to be merciful towards our neighbour.

If we love JESUS our SAVIOUR, we ought to desire to please Him, and to advance His glory by showing forth His goodness to those who know Him not. An unfailing means of attaining these ends is to practise mercy in the way in which He once practised it, and still practises it towards us in so many and such touching ways. We shall please our divine Master if we let Him see in us the same forbearance towards our neighbour that made Him bear so patiently with the faults of His disciples, the same tender compassion that made Him feel for the infirmities and the needs of the sick and poor, the same unvarying tenderness that He showed towards the weak, and that touching kindness towards penitent sinners which inspired such confidence in all who had the blessedness of approaching Him. If we are careful to cultivate these graces they will attract

others to the service of a Master Who confers such blessings on His disciples; and we may perhaps be the means of removing prejudices from the minds of many worldly people, who have seen that those who professed to be religious have neglected to imitate the mercy of JESUS. O LORD JESUS, I have been too neglectful in practising this means of winning souls to Thee; help me by Thy grace, and I will neglect it no more. Grant me Thy all-powerful aid; I ask it by the greatness of that mercy of Thine which Thou wouldest that I should faithfully imitate.

II Point—Reason and justice ought to lead us to practise mercy towards our neighbour.

If we were not to show mercy towards our brethren from motives of zeal and love, reason and justice alone would make it an imperative duty to do so. Is it not reasonable that we should bear with defects which we cannot correct; and that we should use our gifts of mind and heart, and the temporal goods which GOD has lent us, in order to assist and console those who are less favoured than ourselves, and who need our help. It is but just that we should bear with others, and help them, we who need so continually to be borne with and helped. Let us not deceive ourselves; we each have our own trials, and if others sometimes make us suffer, we no doubt on our part are the cause of suffering to others. Let us then be full of mercy; let us imitate our heavenly FATHER, Who never ceases to do good to the most unworthy and the most ungrateful. Let us be merciful, so that hereafter we may find mercy, according to the assured promise made us by our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST as your infinitely merciful SAVIOUR. Beseech Him to teach you to acquire such a merciful spirit as He loves. Humble yourself because you have so many times acted in opposition

to this spirit. Make all the promises to your LORD that your heart suggests, and entreat Him to help you.

Resolution—I will bear cheerfully all the trials that come to me from those with whom I am associated. I will let no opportunity escape of doing them any service.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, full of mercy and love, make me like Thee. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." *St. Matth.* v. 7.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLVII Meditation

SIXTH BEATITUDE: PURITY OF HEART

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD." *St. Matth.* v. 8.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD sat teaching His disciples; and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, infinite Source of all purity, deign to communicate Thyself to me. Thou alone canst make me well-pleasing in Thy sight.

I Point—Those who are pure in heart shall see GOD.

A pure heart is a heart which loves purity, a heart which cannot endure the smallest voluntary fault, however trifling it may appear to be; a heart whose feelings and affections are all

for GOD, or what GOD would have them be. The special blessing promised to such a heart is to see GOD. GOD, Who is infinite holiness, communicates Himself to chaste souls: He unfolds to them His secrets, He enlightens them with His light, He inflames them with His love; even in this life He reveals to them a very clear and intimate knowledge of His divine perfection; but, above all, He prepares infinite happiness for them in those mansions of His eternal bliss which His love has won for us. There He will enable them to contemplate for ever His adorable perfections, there He will disclose to them the vast riches of His grace, and the wonderful virtues contained in the sacred humanity of JESUS CHRIST; and this sight will overwhelm them with ineffable joy. O my GOD, this happiness is offered to me, and Thou hast made easy the way to win it, since Thou hast given me the love of that purity to which it is promised. How utterly ungrateful would it be of me, if I set bounds to my faithfulness to Thee after so many drawings towards purity and holiness which Thou hast vouchsafed to my soul. With Thy divine help, O GOD, I will henceforth strive after such purity of heart as shall give me a right to all Thy promises in time and in eternity.

II Point—JESUS is the source of all purity.

If we were left to our own strength it would be impossible to gain that purity of heart which our LORD looks for in us; but His grace is offered us, and the infinite riches of it are placed at our disposal. JESUS is purity itself, the very source of all purity; from Him flowed forth that precious blood which purified the world from its pollutions and stains, and is now poured forth upon the altar; for "corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."[1] From Him all hearts derive their holiness; they come to be washed in His blood,

[1] Zech. ix. 17.

to purify their affections in the sacred fire of His love, and to be filled with His spirit. JESUS is a refuge to innocent souls, as well as to penitent sinners; to all who wish to preserve or recover purity of heart He says: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock."[1] Can I resist so gracious an invitation? I will draw near to JESUS, and draw from Him all pure affections and perfect holiness.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the sacred source of all purity. Make Him loving acts of thankfulness for His goodness in inviting you to enrich yourself from the treasures of His love. Ask Him for special grace to esteem, to desire, and to obtain the blessing of purity of heart. Lay before Him your sorrows and necessities with humility and confidence. Beseech Him to unite you to Himself, and to purify all the affections of your heart by filling it with His holy love.

Resolution—I will often pray to-day for grace to fear the least faults and to avoid them carefully. I will strive to multiply acts of love towards GOD.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, Purity of virgins, have pity upon us. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD." *St. Matth.* v. 8.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Song of Solomon ii. 13.

XLVIII Meditation

SEVENTH BEATITUDE: THE SPIRIT OF PEACE

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of GOD." *St. Matth.* v. 9.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD sat teaching His disciples; and the multitude around Him.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESU, the divine Peacemaker, pour into my soul the spirit of peace, which is the gift of Thy grace, and the distinctive feature of Thy true disciples.

I Point—The nature and advantages of the spirit of peace.

The spirit of peace is so precious a treasure in the eyes of JESUS, Who is eternal Wisdom, that He has placed it among the eight beatitudes. Let us endeavour to understand thoroughly in what it consists, what fruits it ought to produce, and what rewards we may hope will arise from it. The spirit of peace is the disposition of a soul which has gained such a mastery over self, or rather is so united to GOD, that it is able to repress all impatience, or bitter feelings, or indignation, so as to live in harmony with all men in spite of provocations; it tends also to prevent differences and quarrels, and to reconcile those who are at variance. Great courage is needed in order to acquire it; for its very foundation is forgetfulness of self. It makes us prefer peace and our neighbour's comfort to our own interests. Its advantages also are inestimable; for the spirit of peace is as a consoling angel to all those who meet with it; and more than that, those who gain it are regarded as

GOD'S children, and are effectually so, according as JESUS CHRIST Himself has taught us. Let us recall all the heroic acts of sweetness and patience with which this spirit has inspired so many saints, as, for instance, Saint Francis of Sales, who, when loaded with injuries by a passionate and unjust man, said to him in tones of the most tender love: "My friend, even if you pluck out one of my eyes, I will look at you kindly with the other." This is what the spirit of JESUS produces in the heart which possesses it. Shall I not try to acquire that spirit, by using fervent prayer, by having a real desire to possess it, and by faithfully and constantly practising it.

II Point—The teaching of JESUS CHRIST concerning the spirit of peace is confirmed by His example.

In order the better to understand this teaching of our divine Master, which we have received from His sacred lips, let us look for an example in His conduct. JESUS came down upon the earth to be the Peacemaker between GOD and man; for this He endured the hardest toil, He laid aside His glory, He renounced all earthly ease and comfort, and even His life, in order to procure this reconciliation of which we were to reap the benefits. The history of His actions instructs us even yet more, because we can imitate them. Think of the patience He exercised towards His disciples when He was tried in every way, by bearing with them, by consoling them, by making peace between them, in words full of wisdom and sweetness, when they were at variance. Think of His wonderful condescension to all who approached Him; even His enemies, with all their animosity and malice, could not make Him belie His character. He went so far as to spare the confusion and rage which a too detailed knowledge of the miracles which He worked would have caused, by obliging those on whom He worked them to keep secret what He had done; He was only induced to refute their calumnies, and unmask their hypocrisy,

when obliged to do so for the interest of His disciples and the glory of the FATHER. O LORD JESUS, what a wonderful example dost Thou set us! With reason didst Thou say, that the peacemakers should be called Thy children, and that they should be blessed. My blessing, O my SAVIOUR, consists in conforming my life to Thine; deign to aid me with Thy grace: I promise to neglect nothing that can make me more worthy of Thee.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST as the Author and Pattern of all virtues. Beseech Him to teach you how to acquire a peaceful spirit after His example. Humble yourself for the way in which you have hitherto resisted His teaching. Promise from henceforth to labour to conform yourself to His example. Beg Him to give you the necessary help.

Resolution—I will strive to-day to bear patiently any opposition or contradiction from whomsoever it may come. I will strive by my prayers and by all the means in my power that sinners should be reconciled to GOD.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O JESUS, GOD of peace, have pity on us. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of GOD." *St. Matth.* v. 9.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XLIX Meditation

EIGHTH BEATITUDE: PERSECUTIONS

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD sat teaching His disciples; and the multitude around Him.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, my divine Master, fill me with the spirit of Thy true disciples, so that if, in serving Thee, I draw upon me the scorn of men, I may, like them, rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer reproach for love of Thee.

I **Point**—This beatitude ought to lead us to brave human respect.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." These words, if rightly understood, are full of force and unction; they have animated thousands of martyrs, and enabled them to confess the faith at the cost of their lives, and to brave the most cruel torments with a joy that astonished and converted even their own executioners. Happy indeed were they who were thus called to bear witness to JESUS with their blood: trials short and fleeting; which, though severe while they lasted, yet gained for them an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable reward. It is not given us to follow in their glorious career; nevertheless we can, like them, have a share in this same beatitude, for if Satan no longer stirs up enemies against the name of Christian, yet another mode of persecution has arisen to try the friends of JESUS; that which comes from the worldly and the unwise, who are now so numerous, who delight in heaping

ridicule on the servants of God, in disquieting them by their opposition, in laying snares for them to entrap them into committing sin, and in doing all they can to turn them from the right way in which they have resolved to walk. Am I resolute in resisting this method of attack? Have I never given way through fear of human respect? O LORD JESUS, give me the spirit and heart of a true Christian, and I will glory in enduring for Thee the scorn and persecution of a blind world, which is Thine enemy and which Thou hast reproved.

II Point—Consider in what the happiness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake consists.

When our Blessed LORD tells us that it is blessed to be persecuted for righteousness' sake, He also gives us the reason, adding, "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Such a reward is alone enough to excite our emulation, but for those who love JESUS there is a still stronger motive. JESUS says: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you;"[1] "The servant is not greater than his LORD;"[2] "All these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me."[3] He who is persecuted for JESUS' sake is thereby made like unto Him, and united to His suffering and laborious life. It is commonly said among men that true friends are only known in adversity, and the most hardened heart cannot refuse its affection to a friend who is generous enough to share its misfortunes, and the disdain which it brings upon them. What then will not JESUS, Who is so tender and so loving, do for those who for love of Him expose themselves to the hatred of His enemies? He will enlighten them with His pure light, and give them a mind like that of St. John of the Cross, who asked no other reward for all that he had suffered than to suffer still something more for CHRIST; or a mind like

[1] St. John xv. 18. [2] St. John xv. 20. [3] St. John xv. 21.

that which induced another servant of GOD to say: "Humiliation and persecution are a food which is tasteful to very few, but they pleased my Master, and I know they are good for me; why then should I not love them as He did?" O my SAVIOUR, how strong is Thy love and how powerful is Thy grace. Grant that Thy love and Thy grace may rule my heart, for with their help I can resist all the assaults of the world and Satan.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the strength of martyrs and of all those who suffer persecution. Offer Him the faithful adhesion of all generous souls who have ever braved, and are now braving, human opinion in order openly to maintain His cause. Humble yourself if hitherto you have not imitated them. Promise for the future to strive courageously to live above the fear of human opinion. Pray for the gift of ghostly strength which you need so much.

Resolution—If any occasion arises to-day of braving the fear of what others may think of me, I will not let the opportunity of profiting by it escape me. If I should happen to be treated in any way unjustly, I will try to bear it patiently, for the love of JESUS.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 10.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

L Meditation

JESUS PRONOUNCES A CURSE ON WHAT THE WORLD ESTEEMS

"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." *St. Luke* vi. 24, 25.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS is teaching His disciples and the people.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, free me, I pray Thee, more and more from the spirit of the world, by giving me Thy spirit instead, so that, imbued with Thy doctrine, I may always act as Thy true and faithful disciple.

I **Point**—Consider how much JESUS desires that we should be filled with His Spirit.

JESUS desires so earnestly to see His disciples frame their lives according to His teaching, and conform to His wishes, that, after having instructed them in what would make them happy, He pronounces the most terrible anathemas with regard to those things which are contrary to what He had declared to be blessed. Consider how important it is not to be content with being Christians outwardly, but to strive to be really so inwardly, by bringing our hearts and minds into conformity with our LORD and Master JESUS CHRIST. The performance of a few isolated religious practices will not be sufficient to insure the salvation of our souls; our Christian principles should have their foundation in the very depth of our hearts, and should penetrate them so much the more deeply, as the devils by

their deceit, worldlings by their example, and our own evil inclinations by their enticements, tend to make us forget them, and substitute for them their own evil maxims. O LORD JESUS, my only Master, grant that I may retain in the depth of my soul, and do Thou engrave there in indelible characters, those truths the force of which is an antidote to all vices: "Woe unto you that are rich!" you who are avaricious, or devoted to pleasure, or hard to the poor. "Woe unto you that are full!" you that give yourselves up to sinful pleasures. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!"[1] because of your perverseness, in making yourselves like the world. O LORD JESUS, grant me Thy grace; give me that Spirit of Thine which formed the lives of the saints; grant me Thy Spirit, O my Beloved, Who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

II Point—Consider by what means we can be filled with the Spirit of JESUS.

We naturally become of the same mind with those persons whose society we frequent; the more we love them, the more intimate are our relations with them, and the more easily, quickly, and firmly is their spirit imparted to us. Thus we see how those who go much into society, unless they are on their guard, imbibe the spirit of the world; thus again we see friends taking the same views of matters, judging alike, and becoming of one mind, in a word, becoming of one spirit. If, then, we would have the mind of CHRIST, we must seek to be much with Him; to hear His words, to learn much of His inner life; all which we must strive to gain by prayer, by recollectedness, by spiritual reading and constant study of the Holy Scriptures, by meditation, by fervent partaking of the Holy Eucharist, preceded, accompanied, and followed by such a careful preparation of the heart as will enable us to gather from it all the fruits of grace that are contained in this sacrament of love. Another means is reading

[1] St. Luke vi. 26.

the lives of the saints, seeking to find the mind of JESUS CHRIST reproduced in their lives and actions, and living as though we belonged to that holy company. If we use these means faithfully, we shall not fail to find them efficacious. Have I used them hitherto? Am I resolved to use them for the future?

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your only LORD and Master. Make Him in all love a fresh protestation of your unshaken fidelity. Humble yourself for all the concessions that you have to reproach yourself with having made to the spirit of the world; and for the little zeal that you have shown in striving to be like Him. Entreat your divine Master to give you all the help you need in order to repair so great a fault. Beseech Him to admit you, however unworthy you are, to close communion with Him. Make Him all the promises your heart suggests.

Resolution—Make a resolution, according to your spiritual needs and as you are most drawn, out of one of the points contained in the second part of this meditation.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"My disciples are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." *St. John* xvii. 16.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LI Meditation

THE PARABLE OF THE SALT LOSING ITS SALTNESS.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." *St. Matth.* v. 13.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS is teaching His disciples and the people.

2 Prelude—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, to understand the full force of the great lesson that Thou teachest me to-day, so that, faithful to Thy call, I may accomplish all that Thou willest me to do.

I Point—We ought to be the salt of the earth.

"If the salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" The two properties of salt are to season and to preserve. Our LORD employs this figure in order to show that souls on whom He has showered peculiar graces, ought to encourage the lukewarm, and help the weak to keep themselves from being corrupted by the things of this world. When, then, He said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," it was as though He had said; Ye are the elect chosen from among men in order to be especially filled with My Spirit, and so abundantly filled with My grace, that you may influence others; such is My will. I have not given you all these good things for yourselves alone. Salt is intended to savour other things: and so, if you are filled with the knowledge and love of GOD, you ought to make Me known and loved by other men. What an exalted vocation this is, and it is

mine! All the graces which GOD has given me, those especially which have drawn me into closer communion with Him, prevent me from doubting it. The longing desires which I have so often had to promote the glory of GOD were the voice of JESUS inviting me to labour and win souls for Him. What misery, if, instead of aiming as I ought at accomplishing this object, I become like those whom I ought to help. They would indeed be less guilty than I should be, because they would not at least have abused GOD'S grace. There is hope that they may be enabled to rouse themselves to exertion through the care and zeal of others who have made better use of what GOD has given them, but for me there could be no such hope, since, possessing every advantage, I have lost the gifts which GOD gave me for myself and others. Preserve me, O LORD JESUS, from such misery; grant that I may faithfully respond to all the designs that Thou hast formed for me, and that I may serve Thee by unceasing endeavours to enlarge Thy kingdom.

II Point—Consider what virtues we ought to practise so as to be the salt of the earth.

Knowing the great designs that GOD has for us, and longing to fulfil them faithfully, we have only to consider what means we should use in order to do so. Let us strive to learn what they are, by inquiring more accurately the meaning of this comparison of the salt of the earth which our divine Master uses. Salt is a common thing, which we use without accounting it of much value; and thus the virtues we possess are intended to edify and benefit our neighbours, not by brilliant exploits, or by a show of great spirituality, but by making humble, simple, modest efforts to do good, by seeking no vain show or singularity, by bringing forth fruit under the eye of GOD alone, without attracting the notice of His creatures. Salt, as we have already said, has savour in itself and an incorruptibility which it communicates to everything which it penetrates; thus we

ought to be so filled with the spirit and maxims of Christianity, and so steadfast in our principles, as to be able to strengthen those who waver. Salt is used for all sorts of purposes; it seasons the most delicate dishes, it preserves the coarsest food. And so we ought to be indifferent about the works we take in hand; we ought with equal cheerfulness to undertake those that appear vile and are of a humble character, and those that may bring us into good repute. O LORD JESUS, deign to give me these holy dispositions; I am unworthy of receiving them, but Thy goodness is infinite, and emboldens me to ask them of Thee with confidence.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your Teacher and your Master. Thank Him for having chosen you to be the salt of the earth. Ask Him for the necessary graces to enable you to fulfil so noble an end. Humble yourself for your unfaithfulness, and make fresh promises for the future.

Resolution—I will watch over my words and actions, so that they shall be always such as shall edify my neighbour. I will lift up my heart frequently to GOD during the day, asking Him to fill me with His Spirit.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" *St. Matth.* v. 13.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LII Meditation

WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER Which is in heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 14-16.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS is teaching His disciples and the people.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, Who hast vouchsafed to choose me, that I may diffuse Thy light on the hearts of all those with whom I am associated, grant me grace to feel the greatness and importance of the duties which Thou hast laid upon me, so that I may fulfil them carefully and earnestly.

I Point—Light is made to enlighten.

"Ye are the light of the world." Our Blessed LORD endeavours, by many parables and exhortations, to make us understand the obligations we are under of edifying our neighbour. Let us strive to understand the full meaning of these words of His: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel." Taught in the school of JESUS CHRIST, prevented with His greatest blessings, I ought to be enlightened with His light, fired with His ardour. The time is now come when He desires to make use of me, so that I may communicate to others the graces that I have myself received. Among those with whom GOD has placed me, whether they are members of my own family or not, I ought to

be like a burning light set on a candlestick, that it may give light to those that are in the house; my conduct should be like a shining light, which should teach all who know me that religion imparts to the character sweetness, meekness, modesty, humility, patience, tenderness, and love, and at the same time generosity, firmness, prudence, and courage. Because I make a profession of being religious, the eyes of men are upon me. If I live up to my profession as a Christian, GOD will be glorified; but if I act inconsistently, and not according to the dictates of my conscience, I shall become a stumbling-block to weak consciences, I shall dishonour my Christian profession, and shall have every reason to fear that GOD will in His righteous anger extinguish the light which I have so grievously misused. O my GOD! what a terrible account should I then have to give Thee at the last day. May this never happen to me. I desire always to follow the light that Thou hast given me; I desire that my life and conduct may be always worthy of the profession of a Christian, and that I may in all points shine forth as a pure and steady light.

II Point—The example of JESUS teaches us how to disregard the world's opinion.

One of the most fatal obstacles to leading a good life is the fear of those who dread the light because it condemns them. A great number of Christians are cowardly enough to deny by their actions the truth which with their lips they fully profess. Let us learn of JESUS, our Master and our Pattern, how to rise above such childish fears. JESUS had resolved to return to Judæa, where His life was in great danger; His disciples say to Him: "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" He answered: "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world;"[1] that is to say, he who walks in the straight way of

[1] St. John xi. 8, 9.

which CHRIST is the Light has nothing to fear, because he looks only to GOD's judgment. Elsewhere JESUS says again: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day. . . . As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."[1] Such ought to be the feelings with which we should meet the vain judgment of a blind world, in order fully to accomplish our appointed task: "The night cometh, when no man can work."[2] We must then hasten to work the works of Him Who hath sent us upon this earth, whilst the day of this life lasts, which even now is passing rapidly away; for soon He will call us away, that we may stand alone before Him as our Judge. Grant, O my GOD, that these considerations may sink deep into my heart; make me indifferent to the powerless hatred of the world, and advance from light to light, until I am admitted into the abodes of eternal brightness.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Light of the world. Thank Him and praise Him for having vouchsafed to associate you with Himself in the exalted office of enlightening those who are in darkness. Humble yourself if you have been too timid or have been wanting in that stability of character which shows forth the pure light of a real, noble, Christian character. Promise for the future to act differently, and ask for fresh grace to enable you to do so.

Resolution—I must strive to amend all the defects of character which prevent my light from shining brilliantly in the midst of those with whom I live. I will try to show the world that I am a Christian in spite of its contempt and contradictions.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Ye are the light of the world."

[1] St. John ix. 5. [2] St. John ix. 4.

St. Matth. v. 14. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day." *St. John* ix. 14.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LIII Meditation

THE PUNISHMENT THAT ATTENDS THOSE WHO ARE A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO OTHERS: THE REWARD THAT ATTENDS THOSE WHO ARE ZEALOUS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 19.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS is teaching His disciples and the people.

2 **Prelude**—Preserve me, O LORD JESUS, from being the cause of others' falling away, or of being a stumbling-block to any one; grant that, on the contrary, I may labour heartily to bring others to know, love and serve Thee; and that, with all those whom it may be granted me to help, I may come to the abode of the fulness of Thy glory.

I **Point**—JESUS is deeply grieved when souls are turned away from serving Him.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Our divine Master is grieved

when we turn away from observing His holy law; but it wounds Him still more when we are the cause of others committing sin. This may be done in various ways. The wicked do it in openly ridiculing all virtue, and blaming those who practise it; those who make a profession of Christianity do it, and in a still more dangerous way, by setting a bad example of not acting up to their profession, as though it were not expected of them. The numerous graces that we have received from our LORD, the great privilege of belonging to Him, oblige us to keep a vigilant watch over ourselves. The failings of a worldly person are not noticed; it is natural to see them act according to their principles. It is not so with one who makes a profession of being a Christian; if he acts wrongly he brings discredit upon religion; he gives a sanction to carelessness and negligence in religious duties; he becomes a stumbling-block to the weak and ignorant; and so, instead of labouring to extend GOD'S kingdom, furthers the evil designs of Satan. What an insult, what ingratitude! JESUS honours us with especial love; He has bestowed upon us an abundance of good gifts, and yet we grieve Him by our ingratitude. O my GOD, suffer me not any longer to be so ungrateful, strengthen me more and more in the resolutions that I have made to strive to edify those with whom I am associated, and thus to labour for the advancement of Thy kingdom.

II Point—Consider what great rewards are promised to those who help in saving souls.

"But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." In order to know what fulness of happiness and glory JESUS reserves for those who during their life on earth have striven to lead souls to heaven, we must understand somewhat of the ardour of His love and the extent of His zeal. To procure for a soul, bought with the price of His most precious blood, the means of escaping hell and of being saved, is in one sense to do more for JESUS

than if we had spared Him the torments of His Passion and His most sorrowful death, since it has been ever believed that, had it been necessary, He would have died as many deaths as there are souls to save. Can we wonder then that JESUS promises such glorious rewards to those who would work with Him in that which is so dear to Him? Is it too much for them to hope not only to reap the reward of any present good they may do, but of all that may flow from it from one generation to another? Surely not, for the love of JESUS is infinite, and it is His love which will guide Him in the distribution of His divine rewards. What a cause of encouragement! O LORD JESUS, I would labour to make Thee loved by making Thee known. Every motive unites to urge me to do this; but the one which most chiefly influences me is gratitude: it is by giving myself wholly to the work of gaining souls which are dear to Thee, that I can show my gratitude for the innumerable benefits which Thou hast showered upon me.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your SAVIOUR, consumed with zeal for your salvation; as a most bountiful Rewarder, Who will recompense the smallest service with infinite blessings. Recall before Him, in the bitterness of a penitent heart, all the opportunities which you have let slip, through your own fault, of showing active zeal, and all the times that you have been the occasion of others falling into sin. Entreat JESUS to pardon you. Promise to labour more ardently for the salvation of souls, and strive to make up for the opportunities that you have lost, proving by this how true is your contrition and how great is your love. Pray for the needful help.

Resolution—I resolve from this day to do the work appointed me with greater ardour and exactness, whether it be

teaching the ignorant, nursing the sick, praying for sinners, or any other work of charity.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v. 19.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LIV Meditation

THE AMOUNT OF PERFECTION WHICH JESUS REQUIRES OF HIS DISCIPLES

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." *St. Matth.* v. 20-22.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the foot of the mountain, at which a large multitude is assembled listening to JESUS.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O LORD JESUS, my divine Master, truly to understand the state of perfection, and especially the nature of that tenderness and charity to which Thy holy teaching binds Thy disciples.

I **Point**—The virtues of a Christian should be both solid and real.

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The virtues of the Pharisees were merely outward, and not well-grounded; to the eye of GOD they belied that fair outward appearance which they affected before men. This hypocrisy seems to us to be too hateful to give us cause to fear lest we should imitate it, but are we sure that we are free from another tendency which also made their actions so displeasing to GOD? The Pharisees' conduct was regulated by human considerations. They sought the esteem and praise of men in all that they did; they were full of what they thought to be excellence in themselves, and they despised others: it is against this fatal tendency to pride that we must be on our guard. Pride is so interwoven with our nature, that, if we leave off watching against it even for one hour, it will affect our very best works, corrupting them wholly or in part, and thereby rendering them unacceptable to GOD. O my GOD, suffer me never to deceive myself as to my real motives in anything that I do; teach me how to be rid of the secret pride which so often glides into and mixes with the little good that I do, so that, striving earnestly to be free from it, I may always act before Thee with an upright and pure intention.

II Point—The disciples of JESUS CHRIST should, above all things, be eminent for the possession and practice of the grace of charity.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The SON of GOD did not come on earth, as He said, to destroy the ancient law, but to fulfil it, and to procure for man, whose nature was corrupted by original sin, that abundance of grace which was needed in order to accomplish it. He therefore desires that His disciples should surpass the children of Israel

in the perfection they attain in the spiritual life as much as the new law excels the Jewish dispensation; but, above all, it is in brotherly love that He, Who is Love, would have us surpass His ancient people. After declaring that it is a sin in His sight to give way to anger without a cause, He goes on to say: "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift:" thus teaching us, that GOD will not accept the prayers and sacrifices of a heart embittered with hatred. O LORD JESUS, if these lessons of love and unity are addressed to all Christians, they equally concern me, Thy child. Suffer me not then to disregard them; give me a loving heart; make me ever ready to forgive injuries, and even to do kindnesses to those who offend me; so that I may be known as Thy child and Thy disciple.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Teacher of the new and perfect law. Beseech Him to imbue you with His holy doctrines, and especially to inspire you with a generous love towards your brethren. Humble yourself for all the faults that you have committed against charity. Strive to make amends for them; promise to labour diligently to do so, and pray for the grace you need.

Resolution—If any one offends me to-day, I will willingly pardon him, and if possible make the first advance towards reconciliation. I will do everything with the pure intention of pleasing GOD alone.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"This is My commandment, that ye love one another." *St. John* xv. 12.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LV Meditation

THE LOVE THAT WE OUGHT TO BEAR TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." *St. Luke* vi. 37, 38. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." *St. Matth.* v. 43, 44.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which JESUS is sitting teaching His disciples, with a great crowd around Him.

2 Prelude—Fill me, O LORD, with Thy Spirit, which is all love, so that, doing acts of love according to Thy precepts, I may obtain Thy promised rewards.

I Point—Consider what the rewards are which are promised to brotherly love.

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you." There is no precept in the gospel on which our LORD insists oftener and with more force than that of brotherly love; the motives which He gives us to encourage us in practising it are worthy of His infinite goodness. In return for a trifling pardon which we are ready to bestow upon our neighbour, who is our equal, He, Who is our Sovereign LORD and Master, promises to pardon the sins that we have committed against Him; in return for the little help, the slight aid, that we are able to give our brethren, He promises nothing less than eternal bless-

ings; and as though He feared that we should not sufficiently clearly understand with what a divine liberality He will fulfil His promise, He adds to the expressions which He had already used: "Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." This measure is the intense happiness hereafter in heaven of those who have practised on earth the virtue of charity, a happiness which will be so great as not only to fill them, but also to bestow upon them such a superabundance of blessings, as will inundate them as an overflowing torrent, and cause them to dwell in the midst of the very purest and most perfect bliss. Suffer me not, O my GOD, to be indifferent to the attainment of these great rewards: fill my soul with a desire for them, and enable me to practise that true charity which is so pleasing to Thee.

II Point—Consider to what extent we are bound to practise charity towards our neighbour.

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your FATHER Which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." This precept, which is indeed worthy of the holy character of our Blessed LORD'S teaching, is so clear, that it does not need much explanation; but let us, placing ourselves in His presence, examine how far our conduct is in conformity with it. How do we bear the trial when any one, out of malice, turns our conversation to our own disadvantage, or tries to wound our feelings by uttering a cutting word, or makes us appear ridiculous in the sight of others, or crosses us in our projects? What do we feel when we hear that we have been slandered, when even our good actions are wilfully misinterpreted and made to appear evil? Are we always disposed to look kindly

upon any one who has done us harm and offended us, and to wish him well, and commend him to GOD? These are little trials which our divine Master sends us on purpose to lead us to show love towards our enemies. They prepare us for greater trials in the future, which may be in store for us; but if GOD should never put our fidelity to any very great test, still these smaller opportunities of serving Him offer us the means of rendering ourselves worthy of receiving the same rewards, if we know how to use them to advantage. What a motive to encourage us! JESUS adds that, if we do so, we shall be worthy children of our heavenly FATHER; "for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."[1] O my GOD, if my conscience reproaches me for having oftentimes transgressed Thy divine law of love, henceforth I would keep Thy law more perfectly, and make myself more worthy of the rewards that Thou promisest me.

Colloquy—Worship, adore, and praise your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your divine Lawgiver. Pray Him to teach you how to keep His holy law, and after His example to forgive even the worst injuries with a heart entirely free from the least bitterness or resentment. If you have ever allowed yourself to commit any little acts of revenge which wounded self-love so readily suggests, humble yourself, and ask JESUS to pardon you. Promise Him never to do so again, and ask Him for the grace you need.

Resolution—I will to-day forgive from my heart all the wrongs that have been done me. I will pray for the church's enemies.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." *St. Luke* vi. 37.

[1] St. Matth. v. 45.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LVI Meditation

THE PERFECTION AT WHICH WE OUGHT TO AIM

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect." *St. Matth.* v. 48.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a great crowd.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, make me to comprehend the scope and the character of that perfection to which Thou callest me, so that, applying my whole heart to acquire it, I may fulfil the designs of Thy love for me.

I Point—All are called to perfection.

It is sometimes thought that the call to be perfect only concerns those persons who have taken religious vows, or those who, by divine Providence having their lot cast in the midst of the world, have set before themselves as their rule of life as high a standard as if they were living in a community. If by the word "perfection" is meant keeping the evangelical counsels it is reasonable to think so; but if by this word is understood an entire devotion to the will of GOD, so as to serve Him as perfectly as we are able according to our condition in life and the measure of grace that we have received, it may then be said that the words of our LORD, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect," is really a precept addressed to all. Let us then to-day try to get a right idea of

[illegible] is wholly comprised [illegible] by all [illegible] the Church. [illegible] The third [illegible] exact- [illegible] of a [illegible] absolute [illegible] consider [illegible] they [illegible] The [illegible] person [illegible] to this that [illegible] may [illegible] and [illegible] to and [illegible] which Thou [illegible]

V. PRAYER—Our perfection ought to increase even to our [illegible]

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect." These words of our Blessed LORD do mean that we can in this our earthly state become equal in perfection to our heavenly FATHER, but that by the help of His grace we can acquire such perfection as will tend to make us like Him. Let us pause for a moment to consider to what great dignity GOD raises us, and what a debt of gratitude and fidelity is therefore laid upon us. These words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect," teach us again another truth. The perfection that is proposed for our imitation is infinite, for it is that of GOD Himself, and since we can never attain to it because it is infinite, it follows that we must never place any limits to the efforts that we should make to approach it. It is true that GOD has marked out for

each soul a degree of perfection, but He has reserved to Himself the knowledge of what this is, and so long as He leaves us upon earth, we must strive to make ourselves more worthy of Him, and go on to higher steps of holiness. I must then strive to advance in holiness; for "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] Fill me then, O LORD, with Thy heavenly grace, strengthen me and reanimate me, that I may always carry out the resolution that I now make before Thee of walking in Thy ways with a perfect heart, and of perfectly fulfilling Thy good pleasure, so that I may arrive at that degree of perfection to which Thy goodness has called me.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Teacher of a perfect law. Thank Him for His wisdom which has placed within the reach of every one that perfection which brings us near Him, and makes us fit to rejoice eternally in the joy of heaven. Consider in His presence whether you have hitherto done all you can to acquire this perfection. Try to discover what have been the obstacles which have retarded your progress, by examining your conduct by these three rules: 1. The fulfilment of GOD'S law; 2. The practice of Christian virtues; 3. Faithfulness to the duties of your calling. Form practical resolutions, and ask for the grace you need.

Resolution—I will do all my actions to-day with the view of fulfilling GOD'S will in the manner most pleasing to Him.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect." *St. Matth.* v. 48.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

[1] Prov. iv. 18.

LVII Meditation

THAT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL LEST WE MAKE A PARADE OF OUR GOOD DEEDS

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your FATHER Which is in heaven." *St. Matth.* vi. 1.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, give me grace to understand the dangers of giving way to vain-glory, that I may carefully avoid it, and do everything in Thy sight with the pure intention of pleasing Thee alone.

I **Point**—The dangers of vain-glory.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your FATHER Which is in heaven." Vain-glory is like a worm or maggot, which gets into the finest fruits, preventing them from ripening and spoiling them when they are ripe: thus, when we seek for the praise or good esteem of men, our best works are corrupted by destroying the very thing which would otherwise make them acceptable to GOD; for by taking to ourselves the glory arising from them which belongs to GOD we rob Him of what is His, and commit a great offence against Him. The devil is not ignorant of this, he knows how prone we are to give way to self-love; and he does not fail to attack us through it, and because the vice of pride is especially nourished by whatever is most excellent in any virtue, so the more grace we

have received, the more good works we have done, the more ought we to be on our guard. We must then use as many precautions as a traveller laden with pearls and precious stones would be obliged to use in passing through a land infested with robbers. O my GOD, do I really lay this to heart? Do I receive Thy gifts with holy fear, and hide them carefully from the eyes of men? Fill me, O LORD, with the spirit of holy fear and prudence, lest in the little good I do I seek the good esteem of men, and may not find myself clear from vain-glory when I appear before Thee to give an account of my deeds.

II Point—The practice of a pure intention.

An objection seems at first sight to present itself. Our LORD teaches His disciples to do good secretly. "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:"[1] "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy FATHER Which is in secret:"[2] "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast."[3] A little before this He says: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER Which is in heaven."[4] Do not these two passages contradict one another? Certainly not. They teach us neither to fear the opinion that men may have of us, nor to seek their esteem, to despise equally both the one and the other, to desire GOD alone to be the Judge and Recompenser of our works. They teach us that if it is our duty to do good openly for the edification of our fellow-men, much more ought we to do good in secret, that we may thereby ensure the friendship of GOD. Give me, O my GOD, I beseech Thee, a discerning spirit, to enable me to rule my conduct with prudence and humility, and in all my works to seek and find Thy glory only.

[1] St. Matth. vi. 3.
[2] St. Matth. vi. 6.
[3] St. Matth. vi. 17.
[4] St. Matth. v. 16.

Colloquy—Render to your LORD JESUS CHRIST the homage of your adoration. Ask Him for divine light, that you may be able to discover all the evil that creeps in and mingles with your good intentions. Humble yourself for all that you are able to remember of evil that has marred your good intentions, and for all that has escaped your memory. Renounce all mixed motives. Promise to keep strict watch against their entrance into your heart. Ask for the help you need.

Resolution—I will watch and see that I do all to-day with the pure intention of pleasing GOD alone. I will frequently use ejaculatory prayers to JESUS to purify my heart and my intentions more and more.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Do all to the glory of GOD." 1 *Cor.* x. 31. Do all for the greater glory of GOD.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LVIII Meditation

THE FIRST PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our FATHER, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." *St. Matth.* vi. 9.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—O my GOD and my FATHER, inspire me by Thy grace with sentiments worthy of Thine adopted child;

grant me that, filled with zeal for Thy honour, I may do every thing to the glory of Thy holy Name.

I Point—GOD is our FATHER.

The SON of GOD has become our FATHER by the mystery of His holy Incarnation; it is He Who teaches us to call GOD our FATHER; our dear LORD wills that our prayers should be animated by a filial spirit of confidence. Let us fulfil His will by considering what gratitude, love, confidence, and charity towards our neighbour, this title of FATHER, which we give to our Sovereign LORD, should excite within us. GOD is our FATHER; it is then with a holy confidence that we ought to hope for an answer to our prayers if they are according to His will: for a good father never suffers his children to want for what is necessary, if they make known to him their needs and he is able to satisfy them. GOD is our FATHER; if we are really sorry for our sins and hate them, the sense of sin ought not to diminish the confidence with which we pray, for a father pardons his children's faults even at the time that he is correcting them. JESUS CHRIST teaches us to say: "Our FATHER;" and not: "My FATHER." This suggests two thoughts: that of fraternal union, the duties of which we ought to fulfil with all our hearts, and that of the advantages of such a union between ourselves and our brethren, which assures us of their prayers for us as well as the prayers of the saints. "Which art in heaven." Our good Master would direct our thoughts, our desires, and our hopes, when we begin to pray, towards that blessed country which has become our inheritance through our adoption as sons. What an excess of goodness! O LORD JESUS, Thou hast given me this prayer which is so often on my lips, engrave it upon my heart; fill me with the sentiments it contains, so that Thy FATHER, Who is also my FATHER, may always acknowledge me as His true child.

II Point—We ought to desire that the Holy Name of GOD our FATHER should be hallowed.

The first natural feeling of a right-minded child towards its father is, that he should be known and honoured as he ought to be: this is the first desire that JESUS would have us express to our divine FATHER. "Our FATHER, Hallowed be Thy Name." The saints of all ages so fully corresponded to the mind of JESUS CHRIST, that they were consumed with zeal for the sanctification of the holy Name of GOD; whether they were called to further it by their prayers like Saint Theresa, by their acts of self-mortification as St. John of the Cross, by their preaching as St. Francis Xavier, or by other means, they neglected nothing in order to attain this worthy end of all their efforts. Do I imitate them as I ought? Do I try earnestly to promote the knowledge, love, and glory of the holy Name of GOD, by the practice of virtue, by my prayers, by my example, by giving good advice, as well as by all other means in my power? O my GOD, if hitherto I have been too cold and too indifferent in doing what I might to promote Thy honour and glory, if I do not grieve for the many outrages that are committed against Thee, if I have taken no part in furthering the church's work, is it not because my love for Thee is cold and feeble? O my FATHER, have pity upon me, give me, I beseech Thee, Thy love, and this I pray through the merits of that divine SAVIOUR Who has communicated to me the precious and glorious title of being called Thy child.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the SON of GOD. Thank Him for having deigned to share with us this glorious title and the rights which are attached to it. Beseech Him to communicate to you somewhat of His devotion towards His and our heavenly FATHER; and to fill you with zeal for the sanctification of His holy Name. Humble yourself for the little ardour that you have hitherto shown in hallowing it, which

is in no way commensurate with your ability to do so. Make any promises that your heart suggests. Ask of JESUS the help of His grace.

Resolution—I will carefully fulfil to-day all my religious as well as my other duties, with the view of thereby hallowing GOD'S Name. I will allow no opportunity to pass of sanctifying it in others by a well-directed zeal.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Hallowed be Thy Name." *St. Matth.* vi. 9.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LIX Meditation

THE SECOND PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Thy kingdom come." *St. Matth.* vi. 10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—Fill me, O LORD, with holy zeal for the advancement of Thy kingdom, that I may labour earnestly for it here on earth, and be found worthy one day to see and to share its consummation in heaven.

I Point—We should labour to extend the kingdom of GOD on earth.

Two sovereigns share the government of the human race: GOD, Who is its Creator and its Restorer, the only legitimate

Master of the human race; and the devil, who is an unjust usurper, and who reigns in it by sin. These two masters are both desirous of extending their kingdom; but from very different motives: GOD, Who is love and goodness itself, desires to possess the hearts of all men, in order to give them true happiness; while Satan, on the contrary, is not animated in his designs except by a devilish rage, which would everlastingly destroy our souls. The will of man, which is free, and which GOD does not desire to coerce, places the question of heaven and hell in the balance; on the one side and on the other, an infinity of means is used to weigh down the scale. It was with a view to this that GOD wrought all the great mysteries of religion, that He founded the church, that He every day pours forth His grace for the conversion of sinners and for the perfecting of the saints. On their side the spirits of darkness neglect nothing in their attempts to entrap and draw away souls from GOD, and they have as their supporters and co-operators those over whom they have already obtained the mastery, and who do all in their power to spread sin and its consequences everywhere around them. Shall we, the children of GOD, be less zealous in our FATHER'S service, less attached to His cause by duty, by the righteousness of our cause, by gratitude and love, than those miserable beings are to the service of that tyrant, who only does them harm, and is preparing torments for them? O my GOD, suffer it not to be so; I devote myself with my whole heart to Thy service, do Thou reign completely over my soul, and vouchsafe to let me serve Thee, so that I may labour to promote Thy glory.

II Point—We should desire to see GOD'S kingdom in heaven. On this earth, which is a battle-field, GOD'S kingdom is invaded by the powers of hell, and marred by the evil will of men, but the time of trial will pass away, and GOD'S eternal kingdom will be consummated for ever. A few years more,

and the number of the saints will be completed, and time shall be no more: then will there be no more trials, no more offences against GOD, no more souls snatched out of His hands, no more persecutions against the church, nothing more to oppose the spread of GOD'S kingdom. JESUS CHRIST will come upon the earth in the greatness of His majesty, like a glorious Conqueror, and then will be verified the words of the royal prophet: "Be Thou Ruler even in the midst among Thine enemies. In the day of Thy power shall the people offer Thee free-will offerings, with an holy worship."[1] Our adorable Master, to Whom all nations have been given for an inheritance, will establish His dominion from thenceforth immoveable and eternal; He will reign with the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, and upon each of the elect He will cause the rays of His glory and the brightness of His majesty to be reflected, so that He will make them share in His sovereignty. O LORD JESUS, how consoling, how great, how sweet a hope is this! When shall I thus see Thy glory? When shall I come into Thy presence? Hasten, O LORD, the final consummation of all things, and the moment when I shall be united to Thee in the heavenly country, there for ever to contemplate Thine eternal reign in glory.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the one true Sovereign of the universe. Pay Him lively acts of thanksgiving for all the means that He has vouchsafed to use in order to gain an empire over our hearts. Pray for the exaltation of the holy church and the conversion of sinners, and ask Him to give you true zeal for His glory, and such holy desires of heaven as shall be well-pleasing to Him.

Resolution—I will to-day offer to GOD all my prayers and actions for the advancement of His kingdom in the souls of

[1] Psalm cx. 2, 3.

men. I will acquit myself with zeal and ardour in all the good works that I may have an opportunity of doing to-day.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Thy Kingdom come." *St. Matth.* vi. 10.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LX Meditation

THE THIRD PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *St. Matth.* vi. 10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—Vouchsafe, O my GOD, to fill me with ardent love and perfect submission to Thee, and grant that the accomplishment of Thy divine will may be my whole joy and the rule of all my actions.

I **Point**—We ought to adore the will of GOD with perfect trust and submission.

Faith teaches us that nothing takes place in this world except it be ordered or permitted by GOD; that His divine will presides over all events, and makes use of them for the advancement of His purposes; in this way GOD uses even the malice of men which opposes His designs. Thus it is that He made the hatred of the Pharisees, the fierceness of His execu-

tioners, the fury of the devil, which is in nowise His work, serve His end, and that in accomplishing the great mystery of our redemption by putting JESUS CHRIST to death. Thus it is, too, that He has made use of the persecutions, the heresies, and the schisms of all ages, to produce in His church noble martyrs and illustrious doctors to be His joy and crown. Thus does He now make use of the perversity of the wicked for the perfecting of the saints. All that happens to us is thus directed and ordered by the will of GOD: it surrounds us on all sides like a wall of defence, which no weapon, no temptation, no pain, can assail without His express permission. What a powerful motive is this for confidence, if we believe as we ought that this holy will is the will of GOD, Who loves us and perfectly knows what is best for us! Is it not fit that we should adore Him with a loving submission in all that He judges right either to do or to permit? I know, O my GOD, that all the ills and sorrows of this life are so many means which Thy divine providence uses to further our salvation; I would accept all that it pleases Thee to send me; teach me to praise Thee and to thank Thee at all times and under all circumstances.

II Point—We ought to fulfil the will of GOD with faithfulness and love.

If the love that we owe to GOD our FATHER obliges us to love His holy will in all that does not depend upon ourselves, much more does it engage us to further His designs, in consecrating to Him our free will by an entire and lasting obedience. We should only deceive ourselves if we tried to persuade ourselves that we had divine charity in our hearts when we are not doing what we know to be the plainly declared will of our SAVIOUR. This adorable will is made known to us by the precepts of the divine law, by the duties of our state of life, by the authority of those set over us, by the inspirations of grace, by the diverse events and circumstances of life, since all are

ordered by a providence which is full of wisdom. We ought then to strive to acquire a habit of keeping ourselves always ready to show GOD our love by our obedience. These dispositions of heart are indicated by the words: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." We ought to do GOD'S will in earth as it is done in heaven by the angels and saints; that is, with alacrity, with joy, with love, and with fidelity. O my GOD and my FATHER, help me to be filled with such just and holy dispositions of heart; grant that, after the example of JESUS CHRIST, Thy adorable SON, I may make Thy will the daily and constant nourishment of my soul and the invariable rule of my conduct.

Colloquy—Adore JESUS CHRIST as your Master. Show Him your gratitude for having deigned to become our pattern by being careful to practise what He teaches us. Ask Him for a practical understanding of His doctrine and example. Implore Him to pardon your want of faithfulness in being so often disobedient to His loving will. Promise henceforth to strive after union with Him, by reverencing His will and practising faithful conformity with it. Pray for all the graces that you stand in need of.

Resolution—I will as often as possible, at the commencement of every action, renew my intention of doing GOD'S will. I will accept in submission and love all that GOD sends me, however trying and painful it may be.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Thy will be done." *St. Matth.* vi. 10. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." *St. John* iv. 34.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXI Meditation

THE FOURTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Give us this day our daily bread." *St. Matth.* vi. 11.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—O my GOD, inspire me with a filial confidence in Thine infinite goodness, and make me to understand how great is my happiness in having Thee for my FATHER, and in being able as Thy child to commend all my bodily and spiritual wants to Thy love and care.

I **Point**—Consider that in this fourth petition of the LORD'S prayer we ask GOD to give us all that is necessary for the life of our souls.

Our LORD teaches us in the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," to ask GOD to give us all things that are necessary for our bodily and spiritual life; just as though we said to Him: O LORD, Thou hast given me a soul: I ask of Thee for that soul the daily bread of Thy sanctifying grace, which I pray Thee to preserve and increase in me; the bread of Thy grace, of which I have need in order to shun what is evil and do what is good; the bread of Thy holy word, of which I may taste by means of the instructions which I hear, the holy books I read, the meditations that I make; the bread of prayer, which may teach me how to pray well by the grace of Thy HOLY SPIRIT; the bread of the Holy Eucharist, of which do Thou grant me the blessedness of partaking often and with much profit; this is what we mean when we repeat fervently

and carefully the words: "Give us this day our daily bread." Do I, as often as I repeat these words, think of the extent and depth of their meaning? O LORD JESUS, make me say them continually in the same spirit which animated Thee when Thou didst dictate them to Thine apostles, so that my heavenly FATHER, owning me as His own true child, may of His goodness accept my petition, and give me in my weakness all the help I need.

II Point—In the fourth petition of the LORD'S Prayer we ask GOD for all that is necessary to keep our bodies alive.

Our heavenly FATHER, Whose goodness is infinite, does not only will that we should commend to Him the needs of our souls, but also those of our bodies; this fourth petition of the LORD'S Prayer has also this signification: "O GOD, Who condescendest to permit us to call Thee FATHER, give us all needful help and every temporal blessing which is necessary to support our life, and put us in a condition perfectly to fulfil the duties of that state of life in which Thy providence has placed us. Consider how great is the blessing, not only of having a Prince and a Sovereign for our FATHER, but GOD Himself. GOD, our FATHER, is Almighty; He loves us with a tender love infinitely surpassing that of any earthly parent for his child. He Himself teaches us through His only-begotten Son, Who has become our elder Brother, to commit to His care all our needs. Thank Him for His goodness, and at the same time reflect that it would be doing Him an injury if we mistrusted His love and His care for us. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."[1] If GOD appears at times to refuse His children certain temporal blessings which they desire, it is always in great wisdom and love; for in so doing He saves them from occasions of falling,

[1] Isa. xlix. 15.

gives them the means of salvation, and teaches them on their part to do all that they can and ought to do, so as to be worthy of His divine help. He is a FATHER Who tries His children but for a short space, and does not afflict them except for their greater good. Fill my mind, O GOD, with these consoling truths, and enable me by Thy grace always to bring my life and feelings into conformity with them.

Colloquy—Adore GOD the FATHER as the Dispenser of all blessings both of nature and grace. Thank Him for the unceasing care and attention which He deigns to bestow upon us. Make Him humble and loving acts of reparation for the ways in which you have distrusted Him, or have been disquieted in trial, or for your sins of negligence. Pray for the spirit which He communicates to His true children. Promise to be faithful to Him. Entreat Him to give you His grace.

Resolution—I will oftentimes during the day make acts of confidence in GOD, and submission to His will. I will apply myself diligently to use His gifts with profit to myself, and will fulfil my duties punctually.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Our FATHER, . . . give us this day our daily bread." *St. Matth.* vi. 11.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXII Meditation

FIFTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." *St. Matth.* vi. 12.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 **Prelude**—Deign to inspire me, O LORD JESUS, with truly Christian feelings towards my enemies; grant me, that pardoning them with all my heart for all the wrongs that they have either done me or would have done me, I may make myself worthy to obtain of Thee the remission of my numberless and continual offences.

I **Point**—We ought to pardon others since we ourselves need pardon of GOD.

The Christian law is a law of love; it is not then surprising that JESUS should insist so strongly upon the precept of the forgiveness of injuries, and present it to us under every form, in order that we may be led to practise it by every kind of motive. In the words upon which we are now meditating JESUS authorizes us to claim from our heavenly FATHER the same indulgence which we have used towards our brethren out of love for Him; let us therefore consider what a benefit it is, and at the same time how necessary to forgive heartily all the offences that our neighbour has committed against us, we who so often need that GOD should show us mercy. "Even a just man," the HOLY SPIRIT says, "falleth seven times a day:"[1] what then must it be with those that are not just? Without doubt

[1] Prov. xxiv. 16.

we ought all to say with St. John : " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[1] Experience teaches us every instant how great is our weakness and our infirmity. We should then misunderstand our own true interests, if we put ourselves in such a position, on account of our foolish susceptibilities or our rancorous feelings, that we could not say the words: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." O my GOD, suffer me not to be so unwise as this ; give me a willing heart which shall always be ready to forget the injuries which I receive, and always worthy to obtain of Thine infinite mercy and goodness the remission of all my sins.

II Point—The example of JESUS CHRIST and that of all the saints teaches us to forgive others.

The forgiveness of injuries is so essential to the spirit of Christianity, that everything in the religion of JESUS CHRIST reminds us of its necessity ; not only does our divine SAVIOUR impress it upon us by the most exact precepts, by the most terrible threats, and by the most pressing counsels, but He illustrates His words by His example, forgiving His most cruel enemies on every occasion, and praying for His murderers even in the midst of the most frightful tortures which they caused Him to suffer. The saints of all ages have imitated the example of their divine Master ; we read that the early Christians, instead of revenging themselves upon their persecutors and torturers, obtained for them the grace of conversion by means of their fervent prayers. Do I strive faithfully to follow in their track? Do I know how to render good for evil to those who cause me pain? Do I pray fervently for the enemies of the church, as well as those of my relations and friends? What a claim have I upon GOD'S mercy if I only know how to make use of the precious opportunities that are offered to me of practising forgiveness of injuries !

[1] 1 St. John i. 8.

Colloquy—Adore JESUS CHRIST as your Master and your Pattern. Ask Him to form in you His own mind, and to give you His grace that you may conform yourself perfectly to what He desires you to be and to do. If any rancour or animosity lurks in your heart sacrifice it to Him. Beseech Him to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive all who have ever trespassed against you.

Resolution—I will promptly and heartily pardon all injuries that have been done against me, whether they be great or small. I will pray for the enemies of the church.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." *St. Matth.* vi. 12.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXIII Meditation

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." *St. Matth.* vi. 13.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself the mountain on which our LORD is sitting, teaching His disciples, surrounded by a crowd.

2 Prelude—Give me grace, O GOD, to know how weak I am, and how much I need Thy help in order to overcome temptation. Vouchsafe to teach me that sin is the sole evil that I ought to fear.

I Point—We ought to have recourse to God in temptation.

"Lead us not into temptation." These words present two important truths for our consideration. When we say them we confess that we have no power, without the help of God, either to resist the enticements of the enemies of our salvation, or the inclinations of our evil nature. How, indeed, could we of ourselves be victorious in this warfare, we who are incapable, if unaided by God's grace, of thinking even one good thought? This is a most positive truth, and yet few Christians understand it rightly, and this is the reason why they fall so often; trusting too much to their own strength, and neglecting to have recourse to God, they are destitute of the necessary help which would enable them to resist and conquer temptation. In the second place, the words, "Lead us not into temptation," express the same truth that St. Paul teaches: "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."[1] Without the help of God we cannot overcome the smallest temptation, but through His help we can rise above and overcome all temptations, however violent and prolonged they may be. This comforting truth ought to fill us with courage and confidence. O my God, grant that I may not meditate upon it to-day without profit; engrave it upon my heart, and give me grace never to swerve from keeping the rule which it prescribes for me.

II Point—Sin is the only evil which a Christian ought to fear.

"Deliver us from evil." In this last petition we pray God to deliver us from sin, and from all that might lead to it; this is the only evil which a Christian ought to fear, since crosses and afflictions are really means of salvation if they are received with submission to the ordering of divine providence. Suffering is a happiness to the true Christian: while he compares its bitterness with the joys which flow from it, and finds in them a

[1] 1 Cor. x. 13.

more than ample compensation, or rather a positive advantage. Suffering purifies the soul; it makes it more worthy of receiving help from GOD; unites it to GOD; conforms it to the image of JESUS CHRIST; prepares for it an exceeding great reward, and an untold glory in heaven. Let us look into our hearts, and see whether we really value suffering as we ought; whether we bear it as a Christian ought when GOD in His good providence sends it to us; above all things, let us try to discover whether we fear the misery of displeasing GOD more than any other misery. This is one of the marks by which we may know whether we have the mind of JESUS CHRIST; it is by growing into these holy dispositions that we strengthen and confirm within us that mind of CHRIST which is the pledge of our salvation, and the seal of our predestination.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your GOD, your Master, your Strength, and your Salvation. Ask Him to give you such great distrust of self, and sure confidence in His powerful help, that you may always have recourse to Him in all your trials and temptations. Beseech Him likewise to fill you with His Spirit, so that, judging all things by the standard of truth, you may place a right value upon your crosses and trials, and hate sin. Humble yourself if hitherto you have not had such sentiments as these. Ask for all the graces you need. Promise to be faithful to them.

Resolution—I will have recourse to GOD to-day with great confidence if I am tempted. I will by frequent ejaculations ask for the gift of a lively horror of sin. I will carefully shun the slightest faults.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." *St. Matth.* vi. 13.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXIV Meditation

MOTIVES FOR CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." *St. Luke* xi. 9.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of salvation.

2 **Prelude**—Teach me, O LORD, the full meaning of the great lesson upon which I am about to meditate; that I may always pray to Thee with ardour and confidence, and may of Thine infinite goodness obtain all the graces necessary for my salvation.

I **Point**—GOD always hears us when we pray aright.

"Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[1] It is impossible to imagine a promise that could be plainer and more worthy of inspiring confidence than that which JESUS makes us in these words: "Ask, and ye shall receive." GOD, Who is eternal Truth, promises to pour forth His blessings upon all who ask them of Him. How then can we explain that spiritual destitution in which we languish? How is it that we are not furnished with heavenly gifts, since JESUS is the source of them all, and that He has promised never to refuse them to us? It is because we

[1] St. Matth. vii. 7.

do not ask for them, or, if we ask for them, our prayers are destitute of those qualities which are required in order to make them acceptable. JESUS wills that we should not only ask, but that, if we are not answered at first, we should still persevere in diligently seeking after the graces for which we pray. He desires also that we should be importunate in making our requests known to Him, knocking at the door of His heart until He opens it to us, to pour down upon us those most precious graces, of which He is the inexhaustible treasury. Moreover, it grieves Him sensibly when we leave off praying, or pray without any ardour. O LORD JESUS! too often have I thus grieved Thee; pardon me, I pray Thee; from henceforth I would pray to Thee with such ardour and perseverance, that Thou mayest be unable to refuse me anything.

II Point—GOD loves above all things to hear and answer any prayer which concerns the salvation of our souls.

Our dear LORD desires so much to excite within us a holy confidence in Himself, that He is not satisfied with constantly promising us never to refuse to listen to our prayers; but He adds the strongest and the most touching comparisons: "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your FATHER Which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[1] or, as it is in St. Luke's Gospel: "Give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask Him."[2] What a subject for confidence: GOD is our FATHER, and He is goodness itself. But, above all, mark well those words of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: "Your heavenly FATHER will give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask Him." That good SPIRIT is none other than the HOLY SPIRIT, the third Person of the adorable Trinity, Who is the chief object of our LORD'S

[1] St. Matth. viii. 9, 10, 11. [2] St. Luke xi. 13.

promise; we are then infallibly assured of obtaining that SPIRIT if we ask for It as we ought, and if we obtain It, we are still more infallibly assured of being yet more enlightened, fortified in the practice of virtue, and consequently led on, quietly and sweetly, to our eternal salvation. I give Thee thanks, O my GOD, because Thou offerest me such precious blessings; grant that I may ever prove myself to be earnest and careful in profiting by them.

Colloquy—Pay homage to your LORD JESUS CHRIST, and adore Him. Thank Him for the promises that He deigns to make you that He will hear fervent and diligent prayer. Humble yourself because your prayers have been so imperfect. Ask of Him grace that your prayers may for the future be very fervent, so that you may have the greater hope of their being efficacious.

Resolution—I will pray with more fervour and confidence. I will ofttimes during the day raise my heart to JESUS, to ask Him to give me the true spirit of prayer.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Ask, and it shall be given you." *St. Matth.* vii. 7.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXV Meditation

THE COMMITTAL OF ONE'S SELF TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" *St. Matth.* vi. 25.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of salvation.

2 Prelude—Vouchsafe, O GOD, to enable me to understand what a loving and fatherly providence Thou dost exercise with respect to all our needs, so that, giving myself up wholly to Thee, I may care for nothing but to please Thee alone.

I Point—GOD takes care of all His creatures, but especially of us.

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" These words contain a powerful motive to lead us to give ourselves up to divine Providence. It is our GOD Himself Who speaks thus to us. He is not content to give us a commandment that we should give up to Him the care of everything that concerns us, He would have us see that, having given us our bodies and our lives, He can with still greater ease provide for the necessities of both; and then He reminds us of the care that He vouchsafes to take of all created things; but He also puts before us the preference that He gives us over all other creatures. He

says: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly FATHER feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"[1] GOD then speaks to us of another motive for giving ourselves up to Him, our utter powerlessness to alter or change anything in ourselves from what He has made us: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"[2] JESUS returns to the touching thought of the care that GOD takes of all nature. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if GOD so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"[3] What a subject for thoughtful consideration! My GOD is ever caring for me, lavishing His care upon me every moment; He makes all creatures serve for my comfort, and watches over me with the loving-kindness of a father. Ought not the obligation that He imposes upon me to-day of trusting myself entirely to His providence be my chiefest duty and my sweetest consolation? It is, O my GOD, my joy and happiness to yield myself up into Thy hands, as a child falls to sleep upon its mother's breast, without disquietude and without the slightest distrust.

II Point—GOD takes care of us because He is our FATHER. "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly FATHER knoweth that ye have need of all these things."[4] How capable are these words of administering spiritual balm to our hearts! GOD is our FATHER, and He is the best of all fathers. Of what sort is the child who, knowing that his father is rich

[1] St. Matth. vi. 26. [2] St. Matth. vi. 27. [3] St. Matth. vi. 28. [4] St. Matth. vi. 31.

and powerful, does not feel assured that he will want for nothing? His confidence should no doubt be great; but our case is far better. The riches of all the great ones of the earth together could never equal those of our heavenly FATHER; and His heart is far more tender than that of any earthly father. Our LORD adds: "Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] It was not in order to give His authority to men's negligence, and set them free from all care, that His divine providence deigned to provide for their needs; but He desired that, labouring to procure the necessaries of life without disquietude, they should make those of their salvation the object of their chief care. JESUS adds: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."[2] The needs of the morrow shall find in the treasury of divine providence the succour and the help which is necessary, and GOD will never fail those who put their trust in Him, and serve Him faithfully. Engrave, O my LORD JESUS, upon my heart these truths which are so comforting, and never suffer them to be effaced.

Colloquy—Adore the loving providence of GOD the FATHER. Give Him humble and hearty thanks for all the care that He vouchsafes to take of you every moment of your life. Entreat Him to inspire you with that filial confidence which does Him honour, and disposes our souls to receive from Him the most abundant and the sweetest blessings.

Resolution—I will fulfil with exactness all the duties of my station, as in GOD'S sight, without being disquieted about the success which may attend my temporal affairs.

Offer the Resolution.

[1] St. Matth. vi. 33. [2] St. Matth. vi. 34.

Spiritual Reflection—"Your heavenly FATHER knoweth that ye have need of all these things." *St. Matth.* vi. 32. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." *St. Matth.* vi. 34.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXVI Meditation

THE PRECEPT OF CHARITY

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" *St. Matth.* vii. 1-3.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of eternal life.

2 **Prelude**—O my GOD, without Thee I am a poor, helpless creature, if Thou leavest me to my own weakness; I am led to excuse all my faults, and to exaggerate those of my brethren. Deign, then, to grant me Thy divine help, so that, never allowing myself either to judge or condemn others, I may at the last great day escape Thy terrible judgment.

I **Point**—We ought never to judge any one, because this right belongs to GOD alone.

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." If we consider these words attentively, we shall discover in them the wisdom of GOD, His justice, His goodness, His power, as well as that

maintenance of His rights which becomes His supreme majesty. His wisdom is shown in the means He takes, in the motives that He puts before us in order to keep us from a fault, which, wherever it prevails, destroys the peace and concord between brethren. It is that goodness which thus seeks to stifle in its first principles all seeds of division. His justice is shown us by His threat to treat us as we treat our neighbour. His power is also shown; for He reminds men, that if He leaves them a free choice in this world, either to keep or to break His laws, He will take account of what they have done at the hour of their death. Finally, He reminds us that He is the sole Judge, because He alone has the right of demanding from His own creatures an account of their actions. O my GOD! Thy divine perfections shine forth in all Thy works and in all Thy words; fill me with such sentiments as they ought to inspire; grant me that, admiring Thy wisdom, fearing Thy justice, loving Thy goodness, humbling myself under Thy power, and adoring Thy sovereignty, I may carefully abstain from judging my neighbour, out of reverence for Thy commands, which forbid it, and out of love for Thy most holy will.

II Point—We ought never to judge any one, because our judgments are ordinarily false and unjust.

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"[1] It is our own evil inclinations, the miserable remains of original sin, which lead us to judge our neighbour, and that unjustly; and it is the same disposition which causes us to judge ourselves so much the more favourably as we have a larger amount of self-love to blind us. The slightest faults of our neighbour, especially if he displeases us, seem like great crimes in our eyes, while we regard our own most grave faults as slight failings. I will look well into my own heart, and search my conscience,

[1] St. Matth. vii. 3.

and force myself to discover how far this vice, so common to the children of men, is eradicated from my heart. If there is in my heart any secret self-esteem, accompanied with a feeling of contempt for certain people above whom, without avowing it, I prefer myself; if I readily misinterpret the actions of those who displease me; if I find fault with others oftener than I do with myself; then I have reason to fear that I shall fall into the same illusion of self-love for which JESUS reproaches the Jews in these words: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" O my SAVIOUR, keep me from doing such acts of injustice; give me a humble heart, filled with contempt for myself and esteem of my neighbour, so that I may ever judge myself rigorously and severely, and put the best construction on all the actions of my brethren.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your Master and your SAVIOUR. Pray Him to make His wholesome instructions sink deep into your heart. Ask pardon of Him for all the rash judgments that you have allowed yourself to form. Entreat Him to strengthen within you the virtue of humility and mistrust of self, and promise Him to neglect nothing in order to acquire those virtues which can alone enable you to keep from judging others rashly.

Resolution—If tempted to judge ill of any one, I will turn the judgment against myself, by thinking how wanting I am in humility and charity.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Judge not, that ye be not judged." *St. Matth.* vii. 1.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXVII Meditation

THE WAY TO HEAVEN IS A NARROW WAY

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." *St. Matth.* vii. 13, 14.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of eternal life.

2 Prelude—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, always to follow Thee to Calvary along that road of suffering, that, after walking in it in this world by love, I may come to the heavenly joy which is its end.

I Point—The way of salvation is painful to the natural man, but we must consider in what it ends.

We are taught by our holy faith that every one who is born of Adam is of his own nature inclined to evil, and that JESUS, GOD made Man, in order to save us, has taught us the practice, given us the example, and merited the grace of the virtues which are the contrary to these evil inclinations; but, in order to profit by these great blessings, it is necessary to strive, to fight, and to do one's self violence. This Scripture: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," ought not then to seem strange to me; I have myself many times experienced how painful it is to resist my evil inclinations. Far from being discouraged, when I consider the roughness of the way of salvation, I ought

to be animated with great ardour, since heaven is its goal; and I ought to look with nothing but dread upon the wide gate and broad way in which those walk who, giving themselves up to their evil passions, ignore the practice of self-denial, for this way ends in hell. O my GOD, I thank Thee for all the grace that Thou hast bestowed upon me, in order to save me from the way of perdition; have pity on the miserable beings who walk along it, and keep me from the wretchedness of ever leaving the narrow but safe way, which I know to be the only way of peace.

II Point—The way of the ungodly is not exempt from pain; grace makes the narrowness of the way of salvation more easy for the righteous.

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat:" but when they have entered in, they meet with thorns which tear them, miry places which soil them, and hideous monsters, who cruelly wound them, and sometimes devour them. Passions which we flatter ourselves appear at first to be innocuous, being by nature insatiable, at length exercise a tyrannical empire over the heart which does not at the first subdue them, but is continually agitated by a thousand contrary emotions; grief springs up in the heart which is deprived of what it seeks; disgust follows pleasure; jealousy makes the thought of the happiness of others a torture to it; its desires are a torment to it; care consumes it; pangs of remorse unite with all the other emotions to make it thoroughly miserable. How different it is with those who courageously undertake to subdue themselves, in order to please GOD, and render themselves worthy of heaven: their first efforts are rewarded by an abundance of grace, which refreshes them in the midst of their toil, and fills them with strength to undertake still greater labours; the way along which they walk is of itself strait and difficult, but they

are sustained and guided in it by the powerful hand of JESUS; He of His infinite wisdom provides them with moments of repose, in which He causes them to forget their weariness in the sweetness of His love. Even at such times as they do not feel the sweetness of His heavenly consolations, their soul enjoys peace, and they are upheld by the well-founded hope of one day gaining heaven as the reward of all their labours. It is true then, O my GOD, that even in this life Thy servants are happier than those of the world. How is it that so few people understand this? It is because the greater part of mankind know Thee not, nor Thy most loving and easy yoke. O LORD, suffer me not to share their folly; plant and steady my footsteps in the way, which is not strait except in appearance, since the unction of Thy grace makes it sweet and pleasant to those who walk in it.

Colloquy—Pay your LORD the homage of your adoration, praise, and love. Ask for grace to realize how preferable the narrow way is to the broad way, and pray that you may never be suffered to stray from it. Pray for the many miserable souls who hasten to their destruction, because they will not for a short time practise some acts of self-denial, and do themselves violence.

Resolution—I will fight resolutely and bravely against my evil inclinations; above all, against that one which has most dominion over me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Enter ye in at the strait gate." *St. Matth.* vii. 13.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXVIII. Meditation

LESSONS OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." *St. Matth.* vii. 15, 16.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of eternal life.

2 **Prelude**—Fill me, O LORD, with the spirit of prudence, for it is only Thy divine light that can preserve me from the snares which surround me on every side.

I **Point**—We ought to be alive to the works of false prophets, in order that we may escape being ensnared by them.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." The false prophets which our SAVIOUR enjoins us to beware of are very numerous; and we cannot take too great precautions to escape their snares. Satan presents them to us under a thousand different forms, in order the more easily to impose upon our credulity. There are first of all books, which conceal under attractive titles and composition the poison either of heresy or immorality: there are persons whose conduct is not what it should be, and whose conversation and example would lead us to believe that the world and JESUS CHRIST can be served together; that we can fulfil our religious duties, and yet, under the pretext of certain imaginary convenience, but more truly from human respect, and love of the world, give ourselves up

to pleasure, which is so often sinful and may at any time be dangerous. Were it granted to us to know how many souls had become the unhappy victims of this kind of snare, the number would make us shudder with horror. O my GOD! how then can I escape so great a danger? Thou Thyself dost teach me the way, when Thou biddest me judge the false prophets by their fruits. I must then consider attentively whether those persons who are held up to me by the world as perfect models of this well-intentioned toleration, are submissive and respectful to their parents, unassuming in their behaviour, careful in their conversation; whether they avoid any display of their acquirements, are heartily attached to the faith, reserved and charitable in their speech, prudent and wise in their choice of friends, diligent in the employment of their time, guarded in their contact with the world; I must consider whether the spirit of the world is foreign to them, whether they are filled with dread of contact with it, and horror at its pomps and vanities, and lastly, whether they are earnest and exact in fulfilling their religious duties. Let us notice what influence they exercise and what impression they leave on those by whom they are habitually surrounded. O my GOD, I shall indeed be without excuse if with so many means of keeping myself in the right way, I suffer myself to be surprised and overcome through want of vigilance and reflection: grant me that, aided by Thy grace, I may escape the snares which are spread around me, so that I may glorify Thy holy Name and secure my salvation.

II Point—We must examine the works which we do so as to escape the illusions of a false conscience.

Our Blessed LORD, after having given us an infallible means of discovering the deceits of false teachers, gives us a no less certain way of knowing and judging ourselves, which is not of less importance. He says: "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good

fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."[1] If our works are good, that is to say, governed by the law of CHRIST, if we act up to the spirit of our Christian profession, and practise Christian virtues, we are a good tree; but if our works are in opposition to this simple rule, then we must condemn our life and conduct. Let us take good heed; it is a question of momentous importance. Our LORD says: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. . . . Not every one that saith unto me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My FATHER, Which is in heaven."[2] We must then, if we would attain to eternal life, earnestly seek to fulfil GOD'S will: and what does His will require of me? That I should be humble, charitable and faithful, careful to do all things for GOD'S glory alone, and as in His sight. O my GOD, I would strive to do all this in Thy strength, and I would leave the result to Thee, for I believe firmly that a soul cannot perish that trusts in Thee and makes every effort to love and serve Thee.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the eternal Wisdom, Who has come down from heaven to teach men. Thank Him for the salutary warnings that He vouchsafes to give us. Ask of Him the spirit of prudence and discernment, in order to enable you to escape from the snares of the world and the devil. Pray Him to preserve you from the illusions of self-love, and to give you grace to bring forth good works, by accomplishing His holy will, so that you may be admitted into the kingdom of your heavenly FATHER.

Resolution—I will strive each day to be very watchful over myself, so that all my works may be worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

[1] St. Matth. vii. 16, 17. [2] St. Matth. vii. 19-21.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." *St. Matth.* vii. 17. "He that doeth the will of My FATHER Which is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* vii. 21.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXIX Meditation

JESUS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SANCTIFICATION

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." *St. Matth.* vii. 24.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a great multitude of people assembled at the foot of a mountain, our Blessed LORD seated above them, addressing to them the words of eternal life.

2 **Prelude**—O divine JESUS, Thou alone art the foundation of any real solid virtue; give me grace to understand by what means I can unite myself to Thee, and with Thy help form such virtues, that nothing will be able to destroy them.

I **Point**—No virtue is solid that has not JESUS as its Foundation.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that

heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."[1] Let us strive to understand thoroughly the deep meaning of these words. Those who hear the lessons of our Blessed LORD, and who put them into practice, that is to say, those who are full of a living faith in His divinity and of a real and true love for His sacred person, who apply themselves to understand His divine lessons and put them into practice, are like a wise man who has built his house upon a rock, or rather they will themselves be like that man filled with wisdom from on high, since they have built the edifice of their salvation and their perfection upon JESUS, Who is justly called "The stone . . . which is become the head of the corner."[2] And thus firmly built on Him Who is strength itself, they will see all the ills of this life break upon them like a storm of rain, impiety comes upon them like a flood that devastates all around it, the winds of tribulations and trials are let loose and roar around them, and yet cannot move them, because He upon Whom they lean communicates to them His divine strength. On the contrary, the wretched beings who keep aloof from JESUS, and do not found their hopes on anything but on a mere quicksand, will find this to be the occasion of their utter ruin in their day of trial. O LORD JESUS! safety is not to be found except in Thee; it is to Thee alone that I would cling, and this shall be my joy, for Thou alone art the sole object which is worthy of my love. And yet, O my divine Master, filled with compassion for those who wander far from Thee, I will pray to Thee unceasingly for them, that they may obtain the grace of conversion.

[1] St. Matth. vii. 24-27. [2] Acts iv. 11.

II Point—How the hope of attaining perfection must be founded on JESUS CHRIST.

He that heareth the words of JESUS CHRIST, and doeth them, is like a wise man who builds upon a sure foundation, namely, on JESUS CHRIST Himself. But it deeply concerns us to know how our sanctification is to be founded on JESUS CHRIST. To make Him our sure foundation is to apply ourselves diligently to the fulfilment of our duties and the practice of virtue, not in a self-sufficient spirit, which is a spirit of trust in its own light, of attachment to its own opinion, and is moreover a spirit of caprice, self-will, inconstancy, presumption and selfishness; but in the spirit of JESUS, which is one of humility, gentleness, and self-forgetfulness; a spirit of holy distrust of self, established on its own ignorance and weakness, one of filial trust in GOD, supported by faith and love; a peaceful loving spirit towards one's neighbour, whom we love for the sake of GOD. To build our perfection upon JESUS CHRIST is to be united to Him in heart and mind, to put Him on, to be identified with Him, in such a manner that His merits may be in the eyes of our heavenly FATHER a compensation for the exceeding depth of our misery, and that His virtues may take the place of our vices. To found upon JESUS CHRIST our sanctification is to expect all from JESUS, to do all for JESUS, and with JESUS. I give Thee thanks, O my good Master, because Thou hast placed me in the position of not seeking and finding holiness except in Thee alone. Unite me, I pray Thee, to Thee; grant that I may derive from Thee the necessary strength and the gifts for perfecting my sanctification.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the sole principle of all order and virtue. Thank Him for the instructions He gives you which tend to draw you nearer to Him. Pray Him never to suffer you to found your sanctification upon the sand, but to teach you to lean wholly upon Him. Pray

Him to give you the light of His HOLY SPIRIT, to enable you to work efficaciously at this one great business of your life.

Resolution—I will do all my actions in union with JESUS, and imitate His life as closely as possible.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"My heart is fixed, O GOD, my heart is fixed." *Ps.* lvii. 8.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXX Contemplation

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"When JESUS was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And JESUS put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." *St. Matth.* viii. 1-3.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the foot of the mountain from which JESUS has just descended, followed by a great multitude.

3 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O LORD JESUS, to derive from this meditation those graces of faith and confidence which I need, so that my prayers may be accepted, like those of the poor leper upon whose cure I am about to meditate.

I Point—Consider the persons.

JESUS, our adorable Master, had just been talking for several hours to the assembled multitude, but the consequent fatigue of so long a discourse did not diminish His loving disposition, His considerateness, His patience, His unalterable sweetness. The crowd which presses round Him is full of admiration at what they have just been hearing from His lips. A leper comes forward; he is disfigured by his hideous disease, his countenance is expressive of deep humiliation, and inspires pity.

II Point—Listen to the words.

The leper cries out: "LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." What faith and trust is expressed in these few words. No doubt disturbs his mind concerning the all-powerfulness of JESUS. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst." At the same time he hopes that the all-pitiful heart of Him Whom He invokes will not refuse him the favour he asks. When we pray GOD to cure some spiritual infirmity, do we pray in the same disposition of faith and trust? JESUS answers: "I will; be thou clean." O most powerful word, and infinitely sweet!. O LORD JESUS! vouchsafe to speak it to me. Thou knowest all the infirmities of my soul: Thou seest that it is all covered with the leprosy of its sins and corruption. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole." I commend to Thee all my needs and all my ills. JESUS said unto him: "See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."[1] It is on account of His humility that our Blessed LORD would hide from the knowledge of the people this new miracle; but the leper, filled with gratitude and transported with joy, "began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter."[2]

III Point—Consider the actions.

Consider the reverent manner of the leper, who falls down

[1] St. Matth. viii. 4. [2] St. Mark i. 45.

on the earth before JESUS and worships Him: the short but perfect prayer which he addresses to Him. Consider our Blessed LORD putting forth His hand and touching the loathsome and diseased body of the leper, and working the miracle by a single word: "I will; be thou clean:" His forbidding him to publish it abroad; the command He gives to the leper to go when he is cleansed and show himself to the priests: his obedience to this command; and, above all, his gratitude, which would not suffer him to hold his tongue, but forced him to publish everywhere the great things the LORD had done for him.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as Almighty GOD, Who at His pleasure commands both health and sickness; as your SAVIOUR, full of mercy, Who condescends to pity your miseries and to comfort you. Thank Him for all those exceeding blessings of His grace in which you have experienced His power and His love. Show Him with confidence all the sickness of your soul, praying Him to have pity upon you and to heal you.

Resolution—I will ofttimes make fresh acts of lively faith and filial trust, such as ought to accompany all my prayers. I will ofttimes during the day lift up my heart to JESUS, to pray Him to heal my soul.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." *St. Matth.* viii. 2.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXI Meditation

JESUS UNITES PRAYER WITH ACTION

"But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." *St. Luke* v. 15, 16.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Transport yourself in spirit to the desert place where our Blessed LORD is about to pray: it is far from the world's tumult: picture to yourself the calm of a lovely night, and see the repose of the Soul of your divine Master now occupied in prayer.

2 Prelude—O most loving Master, deign to teach me that, according to Thy example, it is in prayer that I must seek rest and food for my soul; teach me, of Thine infinite goodness, to apply myself to prayer with earnest devotion.

I Point—JESUS divides His time between prayer and active work.

"Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities; and He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." The infinite wisdom of our Blessed LORD'S conduct teaches us a most important lesson. We might have imagined, to judge by the little light we have, that His zeal would have led Him to profit by the people's anxiety to see and hear Him, by not depriving them of one precious moment that they could spend with Him: but JESUS would give us a perfect example of the conduct which we should endeavour to follow. He desires to teach us that the soul as

well as the body has need of rest from time to time to repair its strength, and just as the most robust health must sometimes give way under heavy toil, accompanied with privation and want of sleep, so the most firmly established virtue would not for a long time be able to sustain the practice of zealous good works, if no time were left to it to refresh and reanimate itself by frequent intercourse with GOD. Is my mind filled with this truth? Do I look upon my spiritual exercises as indispensably necessary for maintaining my soul in good health? When I am obliged to give up one of my spiritual exercises, do I take great care to repair the loss as quickly as possible? O LORD JESUS, give me a measure of Thy divine prudence, and suffer me not to neglect the only means which can support my weakness, by assuring me of Thy help.

II Point—JESUS knew how to pray even in the midst of active work.

JESUS, our divine Example, did not content Himself by consecrating to prayer the time that He took from the labours of His ministry, or that He snatched from sleep; He knew how to offer up continued prayer by recollectedness, by uniting Himself in spirit with His heavenly FATHER, by the high aim of His motives, and the perpetual exercise of a perfect charity. If He wills that we should imitate His devotion in the care with which we say our prayers, He wills also that we should imitate Him in the practice of the spirit of prayer. I must then apply myself to do everything as in the sight of my LORD, and with the view of pleasing Him; I must be careful to recall to my mind as often as I can the sweet recollection of His presence, to labour to acquire a holy habit of holding converse with Him, of consulting Him in doubt, of having recourse to Him in my necessities, of listening inwardly to Him, and being faithful to His voice when He speaks to my soul. O LORD JESUS, an interior spirit is the distinctive character of Thy true disciples.

I acknowledge with shame that I have as yet made very little progress in acquiring it; but still vouchsafe to help me with Thy grace, and I will for the future apply myself to acquire it with greater earnestness.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your Master and as the Pattern of the inner life. Ask Him for the spirit of recollectedness and prayer. Acknowledge that if you have not hitherto had this spirit, it is because of your unfaithfulness in corresponding with His grace. Promise Him to be more faithful for the future.

Resolution—I will apply myself especially to-day to the practice of recollectedness and to the acquisition of an interior spirit.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"I will hearken what the LORD GOD will say concerning me." *Ps.* lxxxv. 8.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXII Meditation

THE PRAYER OF THE CENTURION

"And when JESUS was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, LORD, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And JESUS saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." *St. Matth.* viii. 5-8.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the town of Capernaum, which JESUS has just entered.

2 **Prelude**—Grant, O my good Master, that I may faithfully profit by all the practical lessons of faith, humility, love and holy confidence which I may draw to-day from the subject of my meditation.

I **Point**—Consider what virtues the centurion practises in the requests he makes to JESUS.

"Then came unto Him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, LORD, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." The love of this centurion is the first virtue upon which we have to reflect; it was neither for a relation nor yet for a benefactor, nor even for a friend, that he asks this favour of JESUS: it was for a servant, on whom he had already bestowed much care; the expressions he uses show how much his heart is filled with compassion. "My servant is sick of a palsy, grievously tormented." Such a petition could not be rejected by our divine Master. He answers forthwith: "I will go and heal him." The centurion answers him: "LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." The most sincere faith and the most profound humility animate these words of the centurion, and they obtain the grace which they ask for. Let me here pause and ask myself: Does JESUS always see in me, His disciple and His child, the same dispositions that the centurion had who scarcely knew Him? O LORD JESUS, what a subject is it for shame that I should be so different to what I ought to be! Grant me grace, though I am destitute of true virtue, to have a lively sense of my unworthiness, so that Thy justice may lead Thee to pity me, Thy poor creature.

II **Point**—Consider the favours by which JESUS rewards the centurion for his virtues.

Every page of the gospel shows us the goodness of our divine Master: we see Him at all times meek, gentle, loving, kind, full of compassion for sinners and for the sick, always ready to reward the faith and the fidelity of those who have recourse to Him. Consider with what goodness He receives the centurion in the gospel. At his first request He answers: "I will come and heal him:" and when this man, filled with the double sense of his own unworthiness and our Blessed LORD'S great power, says: "LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only:" the good Master not only works on his behalf one of His greatest miracles, but also greatly praises him, and sheds forth abundant grace in his soul to raise the virtues which his actions had shown to a higher perfection. If we understood how much JESUS desires to find an opportunity for enriching us with His gifts, how watchful He is of any good disposition or act, how lovingly He rewards them, we should then be full of holy ardour in the practice of all virtues. O LORD JESUS, grant that I may know Thy mind and may use every means of making myself worthy of Thee, and that I may draw down upon myself Thy favour and Thy most sweet blessings.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your GOD and SAVIOUR, Whose goodness equals His power. Thank Him because He has willed that the holy gospel should contain the history of so many edifying examples. Humble yourself for so little resembling any of the great models set before you for your instruction. Beseech JESUS to supply your great need by planting in your soul the virtues with which He desires to see it adorned, and especially to build up in it a sincere contempt of self and great confidence in His power and goodness.

Resolution—I will often to-day enter into myself for the purpose of humbling myself in GOD'S presence. I will carefully

make use of every opportunity that presents itself of showing charity towards my neighbour.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—LORD, speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXIII Contemplation

THE RAISING THE WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON TO LIFE

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"JESUS went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now, when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the LORD saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother." *St. Luke* vii. 11-15.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a funeral procession issuing forth from the gates of a city, a weeping, disconsolate mother follows the bier. Behold JESUS approaching her, accompanied by His disciples.

3 **Prelude**—O holy JESUS, make me intimately to know

Thy goodness, and vouchsafe to inspire me with the love and confidence that I owe Thee.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider JESUS, our adorable Master, full of all sweetness; picture to yourself His majestic and most striking presence; read His thoughts; with what is His mind occupied? With doing good to men. His apostles are accompanying Him. Consider the bier being carried out of the city; it bears the body of a young man; was he a good young man or not? The gospel is silent on this point; he is now dead. Behold the crowd who come to pay him the last marks of respect: a few show signs of grief, while others seem devoid of any feeling. The mother of the deceased young man is there, she is a widow, she weeps bitterly; JESUS sees her, and He is moved with compassion.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Imagine that you hear the sobs and sighs of the crowd who thus according to the Jewish custom give way to their grief. Our LORD approaches the disconsolate mother and widow, and says to her gently: "Weep not." What must at that moment have been the feelings of that poor mother. She may perhaps have heard speak of the miracles of JESUS CHRIST: though she did not know Him, yet it needed only for her to see Him to be struck with the manifestation of His Divinity which shone out from His sacred Humanity, a manifestation which inspires all pure hearts with respect and love. How ought her heart to have gone forth towards Him in tender confidence. JESUS touches the bier: those who bore it stood still. Then there follows a wondering silence; the attention of the whole crowd is riveted. Our LORD addresses the dead man; He says, with the authority of one who is divine: "Young man, I say unto

thee, Arise." At the same time the dead man sits up, and begins to speak, and JESUS delivers him to his mother. While meditating on these things, open your heart to the influences of the HOLY SPIRIT, and pray the HOLY SPIRIT to make known to you the infinite sweetness of your divine Master. If your divine Master was touched with compassion by the tears of that poor mother, will He be insensible to yours? If He worked a miracle for her who never even thought of asking for it, will He reject our prayers if they have His glory and our own true interests for their end? JESUS does not change; what He was then He is now; He is always infinite Power and Goodness itself. Give yourself up, then, to the love, confidence, and entire renunciation of self, with which His power and goodness ought to inspire you.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the WORD made flesh, full of tender compassion for our miseries and wretchedness. Thank Him for taking upon Him a nature like ours, and extending His loving-kindness towards us. Entreat Him to make Himself known to you, and to remove from you any distrust that you may have of Him. Ask Him to pardon all distrust that you have hitherto had of Him, and with which you have wounded Him; for if it is a distress to an earthly father to be distrusted by his children, how much more must it grieve JESUS CHRIST? Tell Him, in the fulness of your heart, of all your spiritual needs, and those of others in whom you are especially interested, asking Him with confidence for grace to heal them, and, if it be needed, even to raise their souls and yours from spiritual death. JESUS is the Author of life, and He is able to give or to restore life.

Resolution—I will, in all my trials, difficulties, temptations, and even falls, draw near to JESUS, with that confidence which is founded upon His infinite goodness.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, the SAVIOUR of those who trust in Thee, have pity upon me.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXIV Meditation

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MESSIAH

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of CHRIST, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? JESUS answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." *St. Matth.* xi. 2-5.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself our Blessed LORD, surrounded by a crowd of poor, sick, and infirm persons, who follow Him, to listen to His gracious words, and to obtain some favour from Him. See also the two disciples sent by St. John the Baptist standing by.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me grace, O GOD, to have a full and true knowledge of the marks of the true MESSIAH, so that I may cling to Him with love and gratitude.

I **Point**—The true signs of the grace which JESUS CHRIST, our divine MESSIAH, showers upon us.

"Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the

lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." The mystery of the redemption of mankind, the work of the Incarnate WORD, is the mystery of charity, and the infinite mercy of GOD towards His creatures; it was meet then that divine Wisdom should manifest the SAVIOUR to mankind by the marks that were in accordance with His character and His functions. Let us apply ourselves to consider them. They are works of power; He Who works them is truly the SON of GOD. They are works of goodness and mercy; the SON of GOD came down from heaven for no other purpose than to do good. We know too little of the ministry of JESUS CHRIST on our behalf; we do not set sufficient store upon the greatness of His benefits; pray Him then to enlighten your soul with regard to this mystery, and to kindle in your heart feelings of gratitude towards Him. Before His coming men were blind; the prophets represent mankind as walking in darkness and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death;[1] they were lame, they were not able without difficulty to walk in the way of salvation; the leprosy of sin made them objects of horror in the sight of GOD and the angels; they were deaf to the voice of conscience and to reason, paying divine honour to idols who were worthy of their contempt; in a word, they were dead to the grace of GOD, and condemned to eternal death. It is JESUS Who has remedied all these evils; the miracles which He has worked outwardly upon individuals were the figure or expression of those infinitely more excellent works that His grace imparted to multitudes; it is for this reason that He replies to those who ask whether He is the MESSIAH: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." This answer of our LORD comprehended all: let us, as we meditate upon it, offer

[1] Isa. ix. 2.

to our SAVIOUR the homage of adoration, love, and gratitude which are so justly due to Him.

II Point—The duties which are laid upon us by the benefits which JESUS CHRIST, our divine MESSIAH, confers upon us.

The SON of GOD, Who came from heaven to save us, took upon Him our nature, in order to win us to Himself by His infinite loving-kindness, and to remedy our ills by the merits of His life and death; finally, to set before us in His adorable person a perfect example which we ought to follow. Three things are necessary, so that we may know His mind and receive the good things which He has brought down to us from heaven. The first is to open our heart to receive the gifts of His love, to consider attentively when meditating on His mysteries what it is that makes Him so attractive to us, so that the fire of divine love may be kindled and may glow in our souls. Secondly, we must desire and ask in continual fervent prayer, full of ardour and confidence, that His merits may be applied for the cure, the sanctification, and the salvation of our souls; finally, we must consider His example, conforming ourselves to His likeness by the aid of His grace, and growing in our feelings, our dispositions, and our conduct more and more like Him. How great would be our happiness if we knew and loved and perfectly imitated our Blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST. Strive to acquire an earnest desire to do so, or rather ask the HOLY SPIRIT to give you the desire, for He alone can form it within you. Draw near to your adorable SAVIOUR, and say to Him: LORD, I believe truly that Thou art He Who was to come, and that we are not to look for another, for all the promises of GOD are fulfilled in Thee; be Thou then my SAVIOUR, my Redeemer, my Hope, my Salvation, my Joy and my Life, the sole object of my Love, and my eternal Reward.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the very SON of GOD, the MESSIAH promised to our forefathers, our divine Redeemer. Make before Him all the acts of faith, hope, love, gratitude, and praise which you can. Entreat Him to fill you with the sacred fire He brought upon earth, to apply to your soul all the fruits of His divine merits, and to give you understanding and grace to enable you to imitate Him. Ask pardon of Him for your past ingratitude, and yield yourself up more entirely to His service.

Resolution—I will by frequent aspirations give myself to receive the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. I will fight against my besetting sin in order to put myself in a right state to receive the full and precious fruits of His coming.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, I believe that "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD." *St. Matth.* xvi. 16.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXV Meditation

THE COURAGE AND PRUDENCE NECESSARY FOR THOSE WHO WOULD BE SAVED

"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me. . . . And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." *St. Matth.* xi. 6-12.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a public place where our

Blessed LORD is talking to the people, and listen yourself with deep reverence to His sacred words.

2 **Prelude**—I beseech Thee, O GOD, to fill my soul with a humble mistrust of self, and to make my faith a living faith, so that I may be able bravely to overcome all obstacles which stand in the way of my salvation.

I **Point**—The doctrine and the example of JESUS CHRIST is entirely opposed to the inclinations of our evil nature.

The SON of GOD, touched with pity at the great disorder that the sin of our first parents worked in our nature, deigned to become Man in order to raise it out of its fallen state, and to set it even on an higher place of dignity than that of its original state of innocence. For this purpose He came down to this earth, putting before men a pattern of all the virtues which were opposed to their vices, teaching them a pure doctrine capable of healing the blindness of their minds, and offering them grace to do away with the corruption of their hearts; but most men hardened their hearts, so that they would not hear His voice, they even blinded themselves more wilfully, and made JESUS an occasion of stumbling to themselves, thus turning the great blessing which was offered to them and which they rejected into an occasion of the most severe condemnation, and the greatest fall; this is what JESUS would have us understand by His words: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Pause and search your heart, and pray GOD to illumine it with His sacred light, which alone is capable of enlightening you as to your true spiritual state; beseech Him to show you clearly whether there are not some points of the mind and the example of JESUS CHRIST that you have refused to allow, and have rejected, because they combated some cherished sin that you were not willing to give up; turn carefully over every fold of your conscience, search its inmost parts,

and see if you can discover anything which hinders you from belonging wholly to JESUS; hasten, with the help of His grace, to remedy it quickly, for the smallest disorders quickly grow into the greatest excesses as soon as any one begins to stay away from Him.

II Point—The teaching and example of JESUS CHRIST obliges us to combat and to conquer all the wrong tendencies of our corrupt nature.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[1] If man had preserved his state of innocence, far from finding any difficulty in fulfilling his religious duties, he would, with joy and ease, have done the will of his Creator; but sin entered into the world, and from that moment all things were changed. The nature of all the children of Adam has become subject to a thousand evil tendencies; virtue offers them nought but thorns, and to attain salvation they are forced to keep up a perpetual warfare. Eternal Truth Itself has thus spoken: The kingdom of heaven is taken by force. We must then resolve to labour and suffer; to look upon this life as a time of trial destined for the combat. This is how the saints looked upon it, and it was by magnanimous courage, and confidence in GOD'S protection, that they surmounted their difficulties. The same means are offered to us; let us beseech the LORD to teach us how to use them, since we are assured by means of them of attaining eternal life; let us look up to the adorable Captain of our salvation, and to all the saints who have gone before us in the narrow way. Will you be afraid to follow them? They have conquered, and, if we imitate them in their combats, we shall share their triumphs.

Colloquy—Pay to your LORD JESUS CHRIST, with the most profound respect and the liveliest gratitude, your tribute of adoration and praise. Try to repair by your fervent acts of

[1] St. Matth. xi. 12.

homage the ingratitude of those who, instead of profiting by His coming, turn it into an occasion of scandal, and are offended at Him. Beseech Him to make you understand by the light of His grace the necessity that lies upon you to resist your evil inclinations so as to reach heaven. Pray Him likewise to give you His help, without which you can do nothing. Implore His forgiveness for past negligences. Promise henceforth to serve Him with ardour and with a willing mind.

Resolution—I will apply myself courageously to conquer my besetting sin.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." *St. Matth.* xi. 12.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXVI Meditation

JESUS REPELS THE BLASPHEMY OF THE PHARISEES

"Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And JESUS knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" *St. Matth.* xii. 22-26.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a vast plain, in the middle

of which JESUS is sitting with His apostles, surrounded by an immense crowd.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, I beseech Thee, by Thy grace, to draw closer and closer the sacred ties which bind me to Thee, and teach me the true meaning of all Thy wondrous lessons; fill my mind, O my SAVIOUR, with Thy mind and doctrine, for Thou hast the words of eternal life.

I **Point**—JESUS confounds the malice of His enemies.

JESUS had just cast out a devil, and the people who had witnessed the miracle were full of admiration at it; but the Pharisees dared to whisper about a horrible blasphemy, attributing the wonder of His power to the spirits of darkness. They said: "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the chief of the devils." Our adorable Master, knowing their thoughts, addressed to them words full of wisdom: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his kingdom stand?" Our Blessed LORD proved by this plain reasoning in an unanswerable manner that He was not allied to Satan, but was his enemy and his Master; since by casting him out of men's bodies He visibly destroyed his empire. The enemies of JESUS CHRIST were thus not only filled with confusion, but also reduced to listening to this conclusion, which made them tremble with rage: "If I with the finger of GOD cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of GOD is come upon you."[1] He Who speaks to you is the true MESSIAH, promised to your forefathers; He comes to establish on earth the reign of GOD by destroying that of the prince of darkness. O LORD JESUS, Thou art the Liberator of men and their rightful Sovereign; I believe in Thee, and how greatly do I love to

[1] St. Luke xi. 20.

meditate upon the reasons for the faith that is in me! They draw me day by day more closely to Thee, Who art my GOD, my Hope, my Salvation, the only object of my love.

II Point—The important lesson contained in our LORD'S reply.

The divine wisdom of our divine Master has veiled under all His words some deep meaning with which the souls that are truly His sustain their spiritual life. Consider attentively the hidden meaning of these words: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."[1] Your soul is that kingdom, which, if it be divided against itself, will be ruined. The soul of man possesses three distinct faculties: that of knowing, of loving, of willing. If these three faculties are in perfect harmony in the worship and service of GOD, the soul will enjoy peace and all the blessings which accompany it: an inner joy, a holy rest, and an abundance of all heavenly gifts. But if the heart, giving itself to evil affections, resists the light of the HOLY SPIRIT, and enslaves the will, there will then be division and trouble; remorse of conscience will take the place of that sweet peace which the soul rejoiced in when she was faithful, all the gifts of grace with which she was enriched and filled will be taken from her, and she will find herself in extreme desolation. If then she continues to give herself up to her evil inclinations, she exposes herself to still greater evils; for there is much reason to fear that the corruption of the heart, obscuring the spirit, will make it forget all religious principle, and this can only end at last in its utter ruin. Pray GOD, then, to make known to you, by the light of His grace, how very dangerous it is to allow yourself to be drawn away by evil desires, and to implant within your soul a humble distrust of self, which will

[1] St. Matth. xii. 25.

lead you to watch and pray without ceasing lest you fall into temptation.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the true MESSIAH, your GOD, your Master, your Saviour, Who has destroyed Satan's dominion. Make acts of reparation to Him for the blasphemy of the Pharisees, and all those who have imitated them in their impiety and their wilful hardness of heart. Beseech Him to enable you to understand His sacred words, and to fill your soul with the sentiments that they ought to inspire. If you have unhappily, at any time, resisted the voice of conscience, humble yourself; pray for pardon, and ask your divine Master to repair all the losses which have followed your unfaithfulness. Promise, by His help, not to fall again into this sin.

Resolution—I will watch myself to-day with great care, and be very careful to resist temptation.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." *St. Matth.* xxvi. 41. JESUS, my strength and stay, let me not give way to temptation.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXVII Meditation

MOTIVES FOR GRATITUDE AND FAITHFULNESS TO JESUS

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he

taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." *St. Luke* xi. 21-23.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the place where our LORD stood when He worked the miracle upon the dumb man possessed with a devil.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, make me understand how much I owe Thee for having delivered me from the power of the devil; grant that, after so great a blessing, I may be entirely and wholly Thine.

I **Point**—JESUS CHRIST has delivered us from the bondage of Satan.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." In these few words our Blessed LORD sketches the whole history of our redemption. The strong man armed who kept his goods in his palace in peace is Satan, who became the prince of this world through the sin of our first parents; no creature was able to snatch out of his hands the tyrannical sway which he wielded over the world, because he was a participator of the ruin that sin had brought in. But another stronger than he has come and vanquished him; our LORD JESUS, the very SON of GOD; has clothed Himself in our flesh, and has entered into a combat in which He has been victorious. By His precious death and glorious resurrection, He has taken away the sting of death and destroyed the power of hell. Apply yourself to consider this mystery, so that you may be filled with love and gratitude for your beloved Redeemer; but if this common benefit to all mankind touches us but feebly, then let us in detail consider

the means by which JESUS has particularly bestowed it upon us. Has there not been in our lives some period in which, when having, through our own fault, become the slaves of the devil, we have groaned under his cruel tyranny? Who has delivered us out of his hands? Has not JESUS by means of His grace; He has visited our hearts, He has breathed into them the thoughts of returning to GOD, and has made the means which we have taken in order to recover His friendship efficacious. Then there has occurred an interior struggle within our souls: JESUS, armed with His grace and His merits, has entered into it as a victor, and has driven away the devil. What gratitude do we not owe Him! Pray Him to fill your heart with deep thankfulness and to keep you for ever under His easy yoke.

II Point—JESUS desires to possess your undivided hearts.

"He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." These words teach us that if JESUS has triumphed on our behalf and in us, we must for our part remain united to Him with perfect faithfulness. He has taken possession of our souls with His grace, but He has not deprived us of our liberty, and we can again withdraw ourselves from the power of His divine love. Meditate attentively on the great truth contained in these words: "He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." We are not with JESUS when we resist the drawings of His grace in order to follow the enticements of our passions; we are not with Him when we give ourselves up to the world and its vanities, when we neglect our duties for fear of displeasing men. If we are not with Him we are against Him. Against JESUS! O my GOD, make me understand how terrible this is; if I am thus separated from CHRIST, it is impossible for me to do anything that would make me worthy of attaining heaven; for He Himself has said: "He that gathereth not

with Me scattereth." All acts of virtue, all religious exercises, are then despoiled of that sacred character which gave them in JESUS a divine character, and made them acceptable to Him and worthy of receiving an eternal reward; all graces previously received, the spirit of Christianity, the gift of practical faith, and all the other supernatural virtues, are dissipated little by little; and if we persevere in this evil state, there is too much cause to fear that we shall become quite perverted, and entirely hardened. Consider all these things, and if at any time you have had the misfortune to separate yourself from JESUS, cling to Him now from this moment, with all your heart and all your strength, and pray Him to strengthen this good resolution within you by His all-powerful grace.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your SAVIOUR, and thank Him with much love that He has by His death delivered you from the bondage of Satan. Beseech Him to unite you closely to Himself, and never to suffer you to be separated from Him, either by the attraction of the pleasures of the world or through fear of men. Ask Him to pardon you all your past unfaithfulness. Consecrate yourself entirely to His service,

Resolution—I will flee with the utmost horror from all which might separate me from JESUS. I will frequently lift up my heart to my divine Master, and pray Him to assist me by His grace to escape from all the snares of my enemies.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth." *St. Luke* xi. 23. "Abide with me, O LORD." *St. Luke* xxiv. 29.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXVIII Meditation

THE DANGER OF A RELAPSE INTO SIN

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." *St. Matth.* xii. 43-45.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the place where our LORD stood when He worked the miracle upon the dumb man possessed with a devil.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me grace, O GOD, to conceive a wholesome dread of offending Thee, so that, keeping a careful watch over myself, I may be worthy to receive Thy help and protection against the snares of my enemies.

I **Point**—We ought to be constantly on our guard against the snares of the devil.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out." Souls that have the happiness of being at peace with GOD cannot but be most thankful for so great a blessing, and ought to give themselves up to the joy and gratitude which the Scriptures describe as the portion of the children of GOD; but the more precious the grace of their justification, the more should they be afraid lest the enemy of their salvation robs them of it. Far then from slumbering in the presumptuous assurance which

arises from the belief that the soul has nothing to fear, it must be remembered that the precious graces that we have received are contained in fragile vessels, which the smallest fall might break, unless they are surrounded and guarded by the divine protection. "Concerning propitiation, be not without fear to add sin unto sin:"[1] says the wise teacher. These words give us to understand that sins blotted out by the grace of absolution ought to make us remember our weakness, and the extent of the corruption of our nature which has produced them, so that, taught by our own experience concerning the dangers with which we are on all sides threatened, we may by our watchfulness and humility render ourselves worthy of being preserved from falls. When GOD's grace has taken possession of our souls, the devil is forced to flee; but he does not regard himself as conquered: he will return and surround her with snares, he will watch for a favourable opportunity, and if we do not take care to close every avenue against him, he will not be slow to regain his first advantage over us. The sole means of disconcerting his projects is greatly to mistrust ourselves, and at the same time to have an unbounded trust in GOD's protection. Pray GOD then, of His goodness, to establish your heart in these two dispositions, and in order to preserve them, make some practical resolutions.

II Point—The misery of a soul which relapses into sin.

The remaining words of the text that we have taken to meditate upon present to our minds the strongest motives for vigilance and holy fear. "I will return into my house from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished." Our LORD here supposes a soul which openly gives itself up to the enemy without making the slightest resistance, in order to have an opportunity of showing us the terribly evil consequences of such unworthy cowardice. "Then

[1] Ecclus. v. 5.

goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first." These last words especially ought to make us tremble; the depth of our falls are measured by the greatness and the abundance of the help which we resist. What wretchedness then will be ours if we become unfaithful! Pray JESUS to preserve you from this; but at the same time try to establish yourself in watchfulness and courage. A good soldier feels his ardour grow in the presence of danger; although he is not certain of gaining the victory. For our part we fight on the side of JESUS CHRIST, Who has already conquered the devil, the world, and the flesh. With what intrepidity ought we not to sustain such a holy combat when if only we are faithful we are sure of the victory.

Colloquy—Pay to your LORD JESUS CHRIST acts of profound respect, as well as your homage of adoration and praise. Thank Him for the profitable instruction that He deigns to give you. Ask of Him grace so that you may profit by it. Humble yourself at His feet for all your want of faithfulness. Show Him the state that your soul is now in, and pray Him to aid you with His grace, so as to acquire the virtues that you stand in need of, and to persevere to the end in His service.

Resolution—I will keep a strict watch over myself, and call upon GOD to aid me by frequently lifting up my heart, so that I may be kept from sin.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Haste Thee, O GOD, to deliver me, make haste to help me, O GOD." *Ps.* lxx. 1.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXIX Meditation

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a parable. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." *St. Luke* viii. 4-8.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the sea coast, where an immense concourse of people is assembled to listen to JESUS, Who is teaching them from a boat thrust out a little way from the shore.

2 **Prelude**—Grant me grace, O GOD, to be filled with esteem and reverence for Thy sacred Word, and always to receive it into a heart which is well prepared.

I **Point**—In what way GOD has sown His divine word.

"A sower went out to sow his seed." JESUS CHRIST, in explaining this parable to His disciples, tells them that the seed is the word of GOD: consider by the help of His grace how precious this sacred Word is. A word is the expression of a thought, the word of GOD is the means by which He manifests to His creatures His adorable perfections and His supreme will. We can distinguish between very many different kinds of divine utterances. GOD speaks to us through creation and through the preservation of the universe. The royal prophet says: "The

heavens declare the glory of GOD, and the firmament showeth His handywork, . . . their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world."[1] GOD spoke in a still more express manner when He gave us His sacred law; He willed that His Word should be written so that all men should have knowledge of it. He has spoken, and still speaks, to all by the interior voice of His SPIRIT, which causes them to understand His exterior word. These three different sorts of words are infinitely precious; but these are faint and feeble shadows of the ineffable mystery of the Word of GOD, and His expression of Himself in His Flesh, His Incarnate Presence, the mystery of love by which GOD has clothed His eternal Wisdom, His SON, in an outward form, Who is with Him the One and only GOD. These great truths are moreover included in the expressions that JESUS CHRIST employs in order to set before us this lesson: He calls GOD "The Sower:" in order to note that it is GOD Who through the Eternal WORD pours forth and sheds abroad His blessings upon all creatures throughout the world, offering to sinners as well as to the righteous this inestimable blessing. There is yet another expression which is worthy of notice; the gospel says: "A Sower went out to sow." GOD, from all eternity, was within the impenetrable sanctuary of His own infinite perfections; He went forth as it were in a certain manner out of Himself when He spoke to men in the four different words that we have had put before us for our meditation. What a motive for grateful love. What reverence ought not the manifestation of the Word of GOD to excite within us! With what a religious care ought we not to gather up its lessons and make it the rule of our whole life!

II Point—What obstacles may hinder us from profiting by the Word of GOD.

"Some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the

[1] Ps. xix. 1-4.

fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold." Our adorable Master has deigned Himself to give us a very clear and detailed explanation of this parable. He says: "The seed is the Word of GOD. Those by the way side are they that hear;" but because they are negligent, and lack watchfulness and recollectedness, "the devil cometh and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe," with an active lively faith, "and be saved. Those on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no root:" because their hearts are hardened through clinging to vices which they will not give up. "These for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away:" that is, they break all the flimsy and superficial resolutions that they have made. "That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience:" doing on their part all that they ought to do in order to acquire the virtues set before them, and patiently waiting till GOD perfects little by little the great work in them which is to last all their life long.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Eternal Word of the FATHER, manifested to the world in the great and ineffable mystery of His Incarnation. Offer His merits to GOD the FATHER so as to thank Him for having deigned to speak to you in so many different ways, and above all for having given you such an abundant outpouring of the riches of His grace of which His divine Word is the inexhaustible source. Humble

yourself for the little gratitude that you have manifested for so great blessings, and for the little correspondence on your part with His grace. Beseech Him to remove all the obstacles which stand in the way of His divine Word flourishing in your heart and bringing forth fruit. Promise Him to labour so as to leave nothing undone, and to neglect nothing which will enable you to profit by His divine Word.

Resolution—I will practise recollectedness, so as to hear the voice of my SAVIOUR speaking within me. I will fight bravely against my besetting sin, so as to be in a state to profit by Thy holy Word.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Speak, LORD; for Thy servant heareth." 1 *Sam.* iii. 9.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXX Meditation

UNDERSTANDING THE THINGS OF GOD

"And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be? And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." *St. Luke* viii. 8-10.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the sea coast, where an immense concourse of people is assembled to listen to JESUS,

Who is teaching them from a boat thrust out a little way from the shore.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O GOD, to draw from this meditation a great desire to receive from Thee the knowledge of the things which concern my salvation, so that, as far as I am able, I may dispose my heart to receive this inestimable gift.

I **Point**—The understanding of GOD's holy Word is a gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The knowledge of things which concern our salvation is the most precious gift that GOD can bestow upon the soul. This knowledge does not consist in deriving from that holy Word that human knowledge which is entirely speculative, and which we acquire by study; it is a pure light, which attracts the heart at the same time that it enlightens the mind, and gives us power to embrace the good which it makes known to us. This light is not equally communicated to all men; those whose hearts are not right with GOD, and are corrupted by the commission of wilful sin, cannot receive it, for it is the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the SPIRIT of purity cannot dwell in them. When a sinner begins to turn to GOD, our Blessed LORD first enlightens him with the rays of this sacred light, and by means of it he sees the dreadful state of his soul, and the hideousness of his sins; he comes to see heaven which he has lost, and hell which yawns at his feet, and this sight fills him with wholesome fear. Then, if he is faithful to the light thus given him, feelings of trust and love will succeed to those of fear; for his soul, purified by sacramental grace, will comprehend the love of GOD, it will understand His law, and his heart will be set at liberty to run the way of His commandments. Great as are the wonders which this divine light works in the soul of the sinner, those which it works in holy souls are still more precious; for it leads them on from

light to light till they come to the knowledge of the highest mysteries of GOD. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] How eagerly should I desire to be filled with this grace! How careful ought I to be to purify my heart and to put it into a fit state to receive these impressions of divine grace.

II Point—In order to receive the gift of knowledge we must be true disciples of JESUS CHRIST.

"His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be? And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD." After our Master had finished speaking to the multitude, He went apart, and His disciples being alone with Him, asked Him to tell them the meaning of the parable which they had just heard. Imagine that at this moment you are sharing with them the blessing of listening to JESUS, and apply to yourself the answer that He gives. He says: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD." O word infinitely sweet! Why, O my adorable Master, why has this gift been conferred upon me? Thou hast spoken to the multitude, but it is for me alone that Thou hast reserved the favour of this interpretation of the parable, and an intimate knowledge of the precious lessons that Thou givest me. JESUS replies, that you have a right to His divine friendship because you are His disciples; but whence comes this favour? It comes from His having vouchsafed to lay His choice upon you, and from your having corresponded to His grace, certainly not with that entire and persevering faithfulness that you ought to have given Him; but the infinite goodness of JESUS deigns in spite of this to shower upon you His most signal graces. O LORD JESUS, Thou dost manifest Thyself wholly to us by this conduct of Thine so full of goodness and mercy; deign then, O my divine

[1] Prov. iv. 18.

Master, to give me the true spirit of gratitude, and to bind me to Thee for ever with the cords of faithfulness and love, in making me more and more Thy true disciple.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Author of light and the Teacher of truth. Thank Him, with the deepest humility and gratitude, for having chosen you and admitted you into the number of His favoured disciples, to whom He is pleased to reveal the mysteries of His sacred Word. Pray Him for those miserable ones who are far from the light, because their deeds are evil. Ask pardon of Him for your own acts of unfaithfulness. Make the petitions and promises that suggest themselves to you.

Resolution—I will make to-day many acts of trust in GOD, and I will endeavour to correspond more entirely with His grace.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—JESUS, the true Light, have pity upon me. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD." *St. Luke* viii. 10.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXI Meditation

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit,

then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" *St. Matth.* xiii. 24-28.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself a vast plain, and JESUS in the middle of it, speaking to the people.

2 Prelude—Teach me, O LORD, to adore and fear Thy judgments, so that, remaining faithful to Thy law in spite of the contradictions of the world, I may be found worthy at the last day to be received into the full possession of Thy eternal rewards.

I Point—The wicked during this life are mingled with the good.

This parable upon which we are about to meditate describes the infinite wisdom of our LORD, under the figure of a householder, who had sown good seed in his field. By the field is meant the world; the wheat is the just, whom GOD has placed upon the earth, to ripen there by the practice of virtue. The enemy who sows the tares is the devil, who, through envy and malice, has brought sin into the world, and still corrupts the hearts of those whom he can succeed in taking by surprise. All those of whom he has made himself the master are still together with the elect occupying the field of the householder, and are afflicting them in a thousand different ways, by oppression, by persecution, and by putting stumbling-blocks in their way; so much so, that we are tempted to ask why GOD is slow to exterminate them from off the face of the earth. This zeal is that of the servants in the parable, who, when they perceived the tares coming up with the wheat, said: "Lord, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" Listen to the very wise answer

of the householder? "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."[1] If GOD removed the wicked from off the earth, He would deprive the righteous of many opportunities of advancing in holiness, by the exercise of their patience and their faithfulness; and besides, it is not unreasonable to hope that the wicked may be converted and may become pure grain, of which precious harvest too great severity might have deprived the householder. This is the meaning of the words: "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." O profound wisdom! O the infinite goodness of GOD! I thank Thee with all my heart, my Sovereign Master, because Thou hast been with me, and waited for me, all the time that I had the misery of being tainted with the commission of sin; and I entreat Thy pity for all those who offend Thee, that Thou wouldest have the like patience with them, so that, won by Thy fatherly gentleness and long-suffering, they may return to Thee, and be saved.

II Point—The separation of the wicked from the good will be at the end of the world.

"In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."[2] When the day comes which GOD has appointed to be the end of the world, all men will appear together before His judgment-seat, and then will take place the final separation between the wicked and the good. Mark well every expression used by our divine Master: "I will say to the reapers," the angels, "Gather ye together first the tares." He speaks first of the condemnation of the wicked, in order that, passing rapidly over a subject which is so painful to Him, He may dwell with pleasure upon the picture of the joys which He prepares for His elect. "I

[1] St. Matth. xiii. 29, 30. [2] St. Matth. xiii. 30.

will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." The wretched ones who are condemned to eternal perdition will be bound together by terrible bonds, even the chains of their sins: the proud bound to the proud, the impure to the impure, evil-speakers to evil-speakers, blasphemers to blasphemers; and these horrible bundles will be cast headlong into the abyss which burneth with fire and brimstone, where each kind of iniquity will have its own particular punishment. "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." But in each of the following words there is an expression of love: "Gather the wheat:" just as you would collect with care anything which you counted as very precious. GOD will command the angels to gather up His wheat grain by grain, from the greatest to the least of His saints. And where will He place this blessed harvest? In eternal dwelling-places? That would not be saying enough, we need more especial words to express the case that our SAVIOUR has put before us. He says it shall be gathered into My barn, that is, into that place which especially belongs to Him, and which He fills with His presence. Give me, O LORD, a full knowledge of all these things, and grant that, bowing down before the infinite wisdom of Thy providence, I may, if I abide faithful to the end, be made meet one day to be gathered by Thine angels as pure and good wheat into Thy heavenly garners.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Sovereign Master of the universe, over which His providence presides. Make acts of reparation for the murmurings against His way of dealing with you which you oftentimes give way to. Give yourself up unreservedly with the confidence of a child to His way of ordering your life, accepting all which GOD allows you to suffer through the malice of the wicked. Pray Him to inspire you with a holy fear of His judgments, and at the same

time to fill you with Christian hope founded on the merits of JESUS, and on His infinite goodness. Make acts of fear and hope.

Resolution—I will to-day bear with patience anything into which the evil disposition of others may take occasion to vex me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Thy judgments are like the great deep." *Ps.* xxxvi. 6. "The works of His hands are verity and judgment." *Ps.* cxi. 7. "Give sentence with me, O GOD, and defend my cause against the ungodly people: O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man." *Ps.* xliii. 1.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXII Meditation

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

"Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." *St. Matth.* xiii. 33.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a vast plain, and JESUS in midst of it, speaking to the people.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O GOD, to know clearly and fully how great is the love that Thou hast shown to men in the fulfilment of the sacred mysteries upon which I am about to meditate, and grant that my heart may be kindled with the fire that Thou camest to send upon the earth.

I Point—The parable of the leaven is a type of the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Under the symbol of leaven our LORD JESUS CHRIST depicts to us that mystery of love which brought Him down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. He united His divinity to our human nature; He submitted to every kind of torment and opprobrium, allowing His enemies to scourge His body, to shed His blood, and to heap shame and reproach upon Him, and it is in this way that He is that true leaven whose secret power has ever since been communicated to mankind in general. When JESUS CHRIST spoke this parable no one understood it, for even His apostles knew very little about the mysteries of His death and passion: it was then spoken especially for those who should come after, and who should be in a state to gather from it food for the nourishment of their souls, and for us in particular who meditate on it to-day. Pray, then, your divine LORD and SAVIOUR, to make its deep meaning clear to you, and not to suffer you to remain insensible to such strong and touching proofs of His infinite love.

II Point—The parable of the leaven is a type of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The mystery of GOD made Man, the death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, His agonizing sacrifice upon the Cross to redeem mankind, exceeds without doubt all that created intelligence could conceive or hope for from the infinite goodness of GOD; but still this was all too little for the love of JESUS. He has given to each faithful soul, in addition, in the Holy Eucharist the gift of His merits, of His grace, and of Himself wholly and entirely; and this is truly called the

Sacrament of His love. It is by this ineffable mystery that He unites Himself to us; this union extends to our soul and to our body in so intimate and excellent a way, that we are made one with Him, and He is made one with us. This is represented "by the leaven hid in three measures of meal." But why three measures? To symbolize the three powers of the soul, which should be all dwelt in by JESUS CHRIST. Our understanding, united and conformed to His, ought not to be filled except with GOD and with those things which are in accordance with the will of GOD: our affections ought to reach forth entirely to GOD; our wills, guided by His love, ought to bring forth fruits bearing His image. Such are the blessed effects that the Holy Communion ought to produce in our whole being; but they are not the only fruits of this adorable Sacrament; it plants within us the germs of immortality, which will outlive the dissolution of our bodies: the eye of GOD, when it rests on the dust into which our bodies will crumble, will recognise us as members of His well-beloved SON, and at the summons of the resurrection-day our bodies will rise from the grave, clothed in all the glory which belonged to living members of JESUS CHRIST. This is the second leavening of the meal which is unreservedly promised to us, if during this life we have allowed the first leavening to be wrought in us, by striving to be filled with the spirit and with the mind of JESUS CHRIST, and by acquiring His virtues. How sublime are these mysteries! To what a high dignity do they exalt us! Let us understand how unworthy it is for us to be engrossed with the things of this world, how ungrateful we should be if we did not love GOD, Who works such great wonders for us!

Colloquy—Offer to your LORD JESUS CHRIST, with reverence, the homage of adoration, love, and gratitude. Humbly thank Him that He has deigned to take upon Him our nature, and die for us, and that He has left us in His heavenly feast a

fountain of all virtues and a pledge of future glory. Beseech Him to apply to your souls the fruits of His adorable mysteries. Ask pardon for your want of faithfulness, by which you have put obstacles in the way of His carrying out the designs of His love. Make practical resolutions, so as to render yourself for the future more worthy of His love.

Resolution—I will strive often during the day to think upon the great mystery of love which I have been meditating upon, and to consecrate to JESUS CHRIST my understanding, my affections, and my will. I will empty myself of love of self, so that JESUS may take possession of my heart.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him." *St. John* vi. 56.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXIII Meditation

THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." *St. Matth.* xiii. 44-46.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a vast plain, and in the middle of it JESUS, speaking to the people.

2 **Prelude**—O my GOD, give me grace to prize as I ought the things which affect my salvation; so that, despising all that does not concern it, I may be ready to lose all things rather than compromise my eternal interests.

I **Point**—The infinite value of the things of salvation.

Our adorable Master multiplies comparisons in order to make us comprehend the great excellency of the blessings of grace and heavenly glory. These blessings are nothing less than the price of His blood; do we think of this when we waste His grace with so little thought? The good works that we are able to do by the help of His grace make us worthy of receiving His infinite rewards. These rewards are not measured by our own merits, but are dealt out to us according to the merits of JESUS CHRIST, and they are infinite. It was the saying of one to whom GOD revealed something of the joy which might be attained through the merits of JESUS CHRIST, that were it possible to collect all the riches of the world, all the honours, all the pleasures, all natural advantages, such as health, talents, mental acquirements, and put them in comparison with the lowest degree of grace and glory which a Christian can make himself worthy of attaining by the smallest act of faithfulness, there would be a greater distance between these two kinds of treasures than there would be between a grain of sand and a large nugget of gold; or rather no comparison at all can be made between the two, because the good things of nature are fragile, perishable, and human, while the good things of grace are eternal, and lift us up to union with GOD. Consider this truth attentively; and when it has sunk deeply into your heart, and taken possession of it, ask yourself to whom am I indebted for these good things of which the price is infinite, and what did it cost my divine Master to acquire them for me; and then what shall I do for a SAVIOUR to Whom I owe so much!

II Point—The things of salvation are worthy of being bought at the price of any sacrifice.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Many saints have accomplished to the letter what our LORD says to those who acquire treasures and the precious pearl in the parable. Enlightened by a bright light with regard to the price of the good things of grace, they have renounced all the things of this world, in order that they might gain them more surely. GOD does not call every one to rid himself so completely of the things of this world; but the same spirit which has breathed such a generosity of purpose into the hearts of the saints requires that we should disembarrass ourselves of all that can impede our course in this life, and that we should be ready to make any sacrifice, if it were necessary, in order to acquire the eternal treasure of heaven. If the world's partisans pursue the perishable things of this earth with so much ardour, if they undertake long voyages, if they are willing to undergo great privations, to take upon themselves great labour, not to shrink from great fatigue with the uncertainty of procuring what they long for; is it not only just and right that the children of GOD, the co-heirs with JESUS, should give proof of still greater courage and endurance when they are seeking to assure themselves of their right to the glorious heritage of heaven? Fill me, O LORD, with these right and healthful dispositions, and, above all, grant that I may, out of love and gratitude, esteem aright and seek the blessings that Thy divine love has merited and obtained for me.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Lord

and Dispenser of all good things, both of grace and glory. Thank Him for His loving invitations to you and for the solicitations by which He deigns to try and persuade you to enrich yourself with His blessings. Humble yourself for the little zeal you have manifested in striving to acquire them. Pray Him to show you the value of them by the light of a living faith. Ask Him also for all the graces you need in order to enable you to give yourself with a good heart to acquire these treasures.

Resolution—I will apply myself fervently to practise the virtue that I most stand in need of to-day, so that, continuing faithful to the end, I may acquire the treasures of inestimable value.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"If thou knewest the gift of GOD." *St. John* iv. 10.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXIV Meditation

JESUS DESIRES TO COMMUNICATE HIS ZEAL TO US

"And JESUS went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." *St. Matth.* ix. 35-38.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the bad, rough roads, and the towns and villages of Judæa, through which our Blessed LORD journeyed, in order to instruct and comfort the people.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, Who wert filled with the most pure and ardent zeal, I pray Thee to communicate to my soul something of that sacred flame that burns within Thee.

I **Point**—JESUS is consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls.

The zeal of our LORD and Master is clearly shown in this passage of Holy Scripture on which we are about to meditate. Our dear LORD took no rest: He journeyed unceasingly along the roads of Judæa, passing from place to place, healing the sick, raising the dead, preaching His holy word, but the fatigues He endured, the works to which He gave Himself up, could in noways satisfy His zeal for doing good to souls. He was constrained to say to His beloved disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." Mark well the expression: "The harvest is plenteous." He likens the work of His ministry to that of reapers, He Who with so much care and toil sowed His divine word upon an ungrateful and hardened earth, which He was soon about to water with His own blood. What an abyss of love! Why then, O LORD JESUS, dost Thou long so intensely to make men happy? Because, JESUS replies, I am the very source of the love of GOD Himself. This is a mystery of love which we who are admitted to be the friends of JESUS are called upon to understand; His human nature united to that divine nature which is GOD the SON, is the source of all the fires of the love of that GOD Who is goodness itself. The sacred humanity of JESUS CHRIST, united to the WORD Who is GOD, makes with

Him one and the same Person; and as GOD made Man was upon the earth, exercising His office as a SAVIOUR, all His other perfections were as it were concealed, so that His infinite charity might be the more fully displayed. O wondrous depth of love! I adore Thee, O my SAVIOUR and my GOD; kindle within me Thy love, transform me into Thyself, so that I may love Thee at last with a love which faintly resembles that with which Thou hast loved me.

II Point—JESUS wills that His disciples should imitate the ardour of His zeal.

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." All that our divine Master has said to His first disciples is addressed equally to us; for the numberless graces with which He has prevented us, the knowledge that He has given us of the value of the souls whom He has redeemed with His blood, the zealous desires that He has so often kindled in our hearts, enlist us on His side in labouring at that work which is so dear to Him, namely, promoting the glory of the FATHER and the salvation of souls. Listen, then, with reverence to the command that He gives you in these words: "Pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." It is as if He said: Be not content with working yourself, with all your strength, to establish and extend the kingdom of GOD in men's souls; but try to inspire others with the same zeal with which you have been yourself filled. I am come to bring fire upon the earth, it is already kindled in your hearts: that is not enough; My will is that it should inflame, that it should be communicated from one to another, and consume all hearts with its ardour; and as this fire that has descended from heaven cannot be kindled by human means, since too you are unable by yourself both to keep it burning within you and to

communicate it to others, pray the LORD of the harvest, Who is the sole Dispenser of grace, to raise up labourers to work in His harvest. To Thee, O LORD JESUS, will I pray, to Thee will I make my humble petitions; kindle Thy divine fire within all our hearts, turn all Thy disciples into apostles, and deign to grant an abundant blessing to their zealous labours.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your SAVIOUR and the zealous Lover of your soul. Open to Him your heart, and express to Him your reverence, your gratitude and your love. If you do not find in your heart that ardent zeal which is the distinctive characteristic of the true disciples of JESUS, humble yourself, and pray your divine Master, through His grace, to give you this zeal. If you have this zeal already, thank GOD humbly and heartily, for this disposition is a gift of His goodness, and pray Him to make it bring forth good and abundant fruit in your lives.

Resolution—I will cheerfully embrace to-day every opportunity that I may have of exercising my zeal.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled." *St. Luke* xii. 49. JESUS, zealous for the good of souls, conform my life to Thine.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXV Meditation

FEAR NOT MEN, BUT TRUST IN GOD

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, Which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before GOD? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." *St. Luke* xii. 4-7.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself our Blessed LORD, in a street or town of Judæa, surrounded by His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, I pray Thee that these words of peace may sink deep into my heart; strengthen, O LORD, my confidence in Thee, and suffer it not that the fear of man may ever make me fail in the faithfulness that I owe Thee.

I **Point**—Men have no power to do us any harm.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Our divine SAVIOUR, foreseeing the persecutions which the zeal of His disciples would bring upon them, armed them beforehand against any dread of persecution, by putting before them man's utter powerlessness, teaching them that men can only touch the body, and cannot hurt the soul, if it be only faithful to GOD. Consider, in fact, how the hatred of the Jews and heathen, far from hurting the first Christians, was of great advantage to them; for it obtained for them the precious grace of martyrdom, and procured an eternal and glorious triumph; without doubt they are even now rejoicing in the issue of their struggles, and in their experience

of the truth of those other words of our divine Master: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake."[1] Consider with regard to ourselves what fruit we ought to gather from these important lessons. They ought to make us care little for men's opinions and judgments, when they come in contact with our duty towards GOD, when we are required to show our faithfulness to Him in doing His will, and especially when we are called upon to show our zeal for His cause. Grant me grace, O GOD, to partake of these dispositions of heart, and make me worthy by always having a willing and ready heart to share in Thy divine promises.

II Point—GOD protects us and watches over us with a fatherly care.

Our Blessed LORD goes on to strengthen His disciples against every sort of fear: He recalls to them the goodness of their heavenly FATHER, and His ever watchful care of them. He says: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before GOD? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." When men shall persecute you, if even the powers of hell are unchained and exercise their hatred against you, your FATHER will cast around you His protecting care; and if a shot cannot reach the smallest bird without His permission, how much more will He preserve you from trials which are beyond your strength, by placing bounds to the power of your enemies which they cannot pass. These promises are addressed to us; why should we then still fear the attacks and contradictions of a world, which after all will not dare to have recourse to open persecution? O my GOD, I acknowledge it; I should indeed be guilty of unworthy laxity, and commit an outrage against Thy fatherly

[1] St. Matth. v. 11.

goodness, if I allowed myself to be alarmed and turned aside from my duties by the fear of men. I promise you, with all my heart, never to yield to this fear; but without Thy aid I can do nothing. Deign to grant me Thy help, and this, I pray Thee, to grant me through the merits of JESUS and of Thine infinite goodness.

Colloquy—Adore GOD the FATHER as the all-powerful Master Who orders all things according to His will, and shields with His protection all those who are His. Make very many acts of faith and trust in His protection. Humbly ask pardon of Him, if your conscience reproaches you of having sometimes allowed yourself to be influenced by what the world will say of you. Pray GOD to make you realise the serious injury you suffer from this weakness, so unworthy of His child. Promise with the help of His grace to give way to it no longer.

Resolution—I will strive to-day to do all the good I can as in the sight of GOD, and without fear of man. If I have any particular opportunity of overcoming this fear, I will take great care not to let it escape me.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"GOD is our Hope and Strength." *Psalm* xlvi. 2.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXVI Meditation

TO CONFESS JESUS CHRIST BOLDLY IS TO BEAR THE CROSS AFTER HIM

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My FATHER Which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My FATHER Which is in heaven. . . . And He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." *St. Matth.* x. 32-38.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself our Blessed LORD, in a street or town of Judæa, surrounded by His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—Inspire me, O LORD, with that holy fear which is the gift of Thy SPIRIT; grant that, in meditating on Thy promises and Thy threatenings, my soul may be strengthened in that faithfulness that it owes to Thee.

I **Point**—JESUS recognises none as His own but those who confess Him before men.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My FATHER Which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My FATHER Which is in heaven." We love JESUS CHRIST, and from the bottom of our hearts rejoice that we belong to Him. Ofttimes the same love that we have towards Him enables us to overcome our natural timidity, and to bear the ridicule that our profession of religion brings down upon us; nevertheless, since our weakness is so great that we cannot distrust ourselves too much, it is well that we should have a wholesome fear which will serve to bear us up in times of difficulty. Carry yourself in spirit to that great day when JESUS

CHRIST shall come in the brightness of His glory to judge both the quick and the dead; call up before your mind the company with which He will be surrounded; see Him present to His FATHER as His faithful disciples those who during their lives have overcome the childish fear of public opinion, while He rejects those who have been the slaves of it; hear Him saying to them, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."[1] Endeavour to strive to enter into the deep feelings and emotions which will be yours at that solemn moment, and ask yourself whether those who now try to make you fear them either accuse you or defend you at that supreme court where the sentence will be irrevocable. O my SAVIOUR, preserve me from the misery of incurring Thine anger on that terrible day! Let the fear of Thy judgments so strongly impress me, that I may be entirely insensible to the opinions of men.

II Point—JESUS recognises as His own only those who bear their cross after Him.

"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." If we love JESUS, we ought to desire to be conformed to His likeness, for love promotes union, and union requires conformity. We must resolve to bear our cross, and to follow in the painful road along which He was the first to walk; this condition alarms us at first on account of our being naturally so weak; but there is no other way except this of becoming happy in this life. In a word, all men on earth must suffer: the partisans of the world suffer as much and even more than the children of GOD, and their sufferings are all the more bitter that they are without that especial blessing that the love of our LORD and the hope of eternal reward mingles with the afflictions of the righteous. Thus, then, it is a great happiness for us to be able to unite our cross to that of JESUS; it becomes by this means far lighter for us to bear, and for His

[1] St. Matth. xxv. 12.

sake and through His merits is worthy of receiving a reward; but what must we do in order to be followers of CHRIST along the highway of the holy Cross? We must accept with submission all the trials of this miserable life, we must embrace willingly the constraint that binds us to the fulfilment of our duties, and keep our souls ready for any sacrifice that GOD may ask of us. There is nothing in all this which is beyond our strength, if only we are aided by GOD'S grace; and that grace never fails those who humbly ask for it. O my SAVIOUR, Thy holy Cross is the treasure of Thy true disciples; make me choose it, and love it, and bear it joyfully all the days of my life, until it leads me to a blessed eternity.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD as your GOD, your Sovereign Master and your Judge. Offer and make Him acts of faith, submission and respect, such as show in their virtues a conformity with His will. Make also acts of love and confidence. JESUS never ceases to be a FATHER; even when He threatens, it is because He proposes nought else but to preserve you by a healthful fear from the evils which you have need to dread. Entreat Him to impress this holy fear indelibly on your heart, and to fill you at the same time with His love, so that both may aid you to walk in the way of the Cross, and overcome all the obstacles you may encounter in this course of faithfulness.

Resolution—I will strive to be indifferent to human opinion. I will heartily strive to overcome all repugnance to fulfilling my duties faithfully.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My FATHER Which is in heaven." *St. Matth.* x. 32. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." *St. Matth.* xvi. 24.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXVII Meditation

THE PROMISE THAT JESUS MAKES TO THOSE WHO GIVE ALMS IN THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." *St. Matth.* x. 40-42.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a road or a city of Judæa; and see there our LORD JESUS CHRIST surrounded by His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, give me grace to know how blessed it is to see Thee in Thy ministers and suffering members, and grant that in all I do for them I may be animated by a true spirit of faith.

I **Point**—We ought to recognise JESUS CHRIST in the persons of His ministers.

We do not sufficiently realize how acceptable to our LORD JESUS CHRIST are the services that we render to His ministers for His sake. Consider, then, the words of our LORD, which are infallible truths: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me." If an angel came from heaven to announce to us that our divine Master, as a singular favour, was coming to honour us

with His presence, to receive the tokens of our regard, and even to permit us to offer Him the necessaries of life; if JESUS CHRIST Himself deigned to condescend so far as to communicate to us His intentions by saying: "My child, I contemplate great enterprises, I must cross the seas to carry the light of faith into the midst of countries now lying in darkness: I desire too to found and support homes for the sick and suffering, schools for the education of youth, and other institutions no less precious in My sight, and I count upon you to aid Me in all these good works to your utmost power," with what earnestness should we not enter into our divine Master's views! What acts of self-denial should we not practise in order to make our offerings larger and more frequent; how joyfully should we bring them, and what a happiness it would be to us to do so! This happiness may be ours if we will, for the words of JESUS are: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me." In another place He had said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me:"[1] adding, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." These promises ought indeed to fill us with an ardent desire to do all we can towards supporting the church, its ministers, and all good works. O GOD, give me grace to be always zealous in performing these sacred duties.

II Point—We ought to recognise JESUS in the persons of His poor,

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Almsgiving is a good work, which disposes GOD to pour down His grace upon the giver; but in order that we may render ourselves fit to receive this grace we must be animated by motives of faith and

[1] St. Matth. xxv. 40.

supernatural love. Let us look into the depth of our hearts, and examine ourselves in the presence of God, and see whether in doing such good works we do not run the risk of losing our reward by not taking care to act from a pure motive. To give alms, or to do some service to our neighbour out of a purely natural feeling of compassion, and without making faith a motive in it, is nought else but the exercise of a human virtue: but this feeling, if accompanied by some motive of faith, such as obedience to God in a matter so pleasing to Him as that of succouring one's brethren, renders us worthy to receive the rewards promised to charity, and is an act really praiseworthy, and truly excellent and profitable to the salvation of our souls. To do a like good work with a faith so lively that it makes us see JESUS CHRIST in the person of His poor, according to His words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me;"[1] is to do it so perfectly that it makes us worthy to receive all the gifts of grace and all the rewards which GOD has to bestow upon us. What have been my dispositions and my motives when I have succoured the suffering members of JESUS CHRIST? Fill me, O LORD, with Thy Spirit; discover to me the faults which have crept into the good works that I have done, and deign to bestow on me the gift of a pure and right intention, which acts out of nothing but a pure love of Thee.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as your SAVIOUR and your Master. Thank Him inasmuch as He has, when quitting the world, left you as a proof of His love the means of serving Him and ministering to Him as though He were still visibly among us. Ask pardon of your divine Master. Pray Him to give you that lively faith in which you are deficient. Promise Him to do all in your power to cherish His grace, and to acquire this precious virtue.

[1] St. Matth. xxv. 40.

Resolution—I will strive to recognise JESUS CHRIST in the persons of His ministers and His poor. If an opportunity occurs to-day I will strive to do good to my neighbour in the spirit of faith, trying to lead him to GOD.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." *St. Matth.* xxv. 40.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXVIII Contemplation

THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"JESUS, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat." *St. Mark* vi. 34-37. (Then JESUS miraculously multiplied five barley loaves and two small fishes, so that the multitude all eat and were filled.)

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a vast plain and a mountain on the sea coast, where JESUS is seated with His disciples; a large multitude is assembled at the foot of the mountain.

3 Prelude—Grant me grace, O LORD, to understand with what power and goodness Thou dost come to the aid of all those who forget self in order to listen to Thee and to follow Thee.

I Point—Consider the persons.

Consider JESUS our adorable Master; contemplate that air of sweetness, that modest dignity, that divine character stamped on His sacred person. The apostles are restless and preoccupied; they desire that their divine Master should send the people away at once, but out of reverence for Him they dare not interrupt Him. Consider that immense multitude composed of more than five thousand persons; they listen to JESUS: see how religiously attentive some are, and how curious others are who only follow JESUS to see His miracles. The divine word works in them according to the dispositions of their hearts.

II Point—Listen to the words.

When JESUS ceases speaking, His apostles approach Him and say to Him: "This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away; that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat." JESUS answers: "Give ye them to eat." The apostles say: "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" Then JESUS, lifting up His eyes and seeing the great company spread out before Him on the plain, "saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."[1] The apostle might have added, if human means fail us, Thy power can supply all things. Then JESUS said to them: "How many loaves have ye?"[2] And they having ascertained what they had,

[1] St. John vi. 5-7. [2] St. Mark vi. 38.

answer: "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?"[1] "Except we should go and buy meat for all these people:"[2] "For they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."[3] JESUS said to His disciples: Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And the people sat down in ranks by fifties, and by hundreds, all in attentive expectation of what was to follow.

III Point—Consider the actions.

Consider the apostles busily engaged in attending to their LORD'S commands: they seat the people in ranks of hundreds and fifties before Him, while He lovingly regards them from the eminence on which He is seated. This done, JESUS takes the five loaves and the two fishes, and looks up to heaven and blesses them; then He breaks the bread, and gives it to His disciples, who carry it to those who are seated. In the same way He divides the two fishes, the apostles distributing them, giving to all as much as they would, so that they all eat and are filled. Then JESUS said to His disciples: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." They obey, and fill twelve baskets of fragments that "remained over and above to them that had eaten."[4] Those that witnessed the miracle that was wrought said: "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world."[5] But when JESUS perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a King, He made His disciples go into a ship to cross over to the other side of the lake without Him, whilst He sent away the multitudes. Then He departed into a mountain Himself alone, and continued all night in prayer.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Very

[1] St. John vi. 9. [2] St. Luke ix. 13. [3] St. Matth. xiv. 21.
[4] St. John vi. 12, 13. [5] St. John vi. 14.

SON of GOD, and SAVIOUR full of goodness, Who with fatherly tenderness provides for the wants of all those who trust in Him. Beseech Him to fill you with right feelings of confidence and trust, and to teach you to give up to Him the care of all that concerns you, so that you may not have a care except to serve Him and please Him. Ask Him to give you grace to strengthen and refresh you often with the Holy Eucharist of which the loaves that He multiplied is a type. Lay before Him all the needs of your soul, and pray Him to have compassion upon you as He had compassion upon the crowd who followed Him into the desert.

Resolution—If I need anything to-day, either for my soul or body, I will have recourse to JESUS with much confidence. I will fulfil all my duties in the spirit of faith, seeking to follow JESUS, and to make myself worthy that He should deign to make me an object of His especial care.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." *St. Matth.* vi. 33.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

LXXXIX Contemplation

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA, AND STRETCHES FORTH HIS HAND TO SAVE PETER

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea,

tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night JESUS went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway JESUS spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." *St. Matth.* xiv. 24-28.

2 **Prelude**—Place yourself in spirit on the mountain where JESUS has retired to pray; from its height behold the lake agitated by the wind; it is the fourth watch of the night; the moon is full, and by its light the frail bark of the apostles can be distinguished in the midst of the waves.

3 **Prelude**—I pray Thee, O my divine SAVIOUR, to give me more and more a lively faith in Thy power, and to confirm my trust in Thine infinite goodness. Teach me to believe from the bottom of my heart that Thou never forsakest those who love Thee, and that Thou makest all things possible to those who love and serve Thee.

I **Point**—Consider the persons.

Consider our adorable LORD alone upon the mountain where He has retired to pray: consider Him for one moment: He is on His knees, His Head is bent down. What recollectedness! He teaches us by His example how to pray, and merits for us the grace to enable us. But the sweetness and the repose of prayer does not cause Him to lose sight of His beloved disciples, whom He sees from afar. They are in the midst of the sea, driven about by the winds, and are making fruitless efforts to reach the haven of Bethsaida. They are in great difficulties, for the wind is contrary, and the sea is getting rougher every minute. Nevertheless they continue to toil in rowing. It is thus that I ought in the midst of the greatest

difficulties to persevere in GOD's service, waiting patiently for the help which He never fails to grant to those who hope in Him.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Behold JESUS coming to help His apostles walking on the sea. They see Him, and cry out with fear: "It is a Spirit." They speak one to another, but the voice of their divine Master is heard above the storm: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." They are filled with joy. How sweet is the moment when JESUS says to the heart after some painful trial: "Be of good cheer, it is I." Peter, transported by the ardour of His love, answers: "LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." JESUS says: "Come." How powerful is this word! It has filled Peter's soul with a lively faith, and with firm trust; he comes out of the boat, and walks upon the water to go to JESUS; what were at that moment the feelings which were uppermost in the mind of the apostle? What should I have felt had I been in his place? The Divine Master often says to me also, "Come." Come out of yourself, abandon your own fancies and attachments, and walk confidently along the way that obedience points out to you; fear not! your steps shall be strengthened and your faith shall triumph over all the dangers which alarm your troubled imagination. O that I could be as full of faith as Peter was then! But when Peter perceived that the wind was boisterous he was afraid. With the weakening of his faith the miracle ceased: "And beginning to sink, he cried, saying, LORD, save me. And immediately JESUS stretched forth His hand and caught him." O loving SAVIOUR, it is thus that Thou succourest me when I call to Thee for help, and puttest forth Thy hand to save me. JESUS gently reproaches His apostle: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Afterwards, when they prayed Him,

He entered into the ship, and made Peter enter into it with Him. The wind ceased, and immediately they were by a miracle at the land whither they were going. So many marvels reawakened the apostles' faith: "They came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the SON of GOD."[1] O LORD JESUS, I would unite myself to them in worshipping Thee; accept, I beseech Thee, the homage that I pay Thee.

Colloquy—Prostrate yourself at the feet of your LORD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, adore Him, and make acts of faith and hope in His power and goodness. Pray Him to strengthen those two precious virtues in your soul, and to grant you grace to practise them faithfully in seasons of trial.

Resolution—If I have any temptation or difficulty to-day I will call upon JESUS to help me, and put all my trust in Him.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"LORD, save me." *St. Matth.* xiv. 30. "Of a truth Thou art the SON of GOD." *St. Matth.* xiv. 33.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XC Meditation

THE INESTIMABLE GIFT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING IT WORTHILY

"The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea . . . saw that JESUS was not there, neither His disciples, they also took

[1] St. Matth. xiv. 30-33.

shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for JESUS. And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? JESUS answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you." *St. John* vi. 22-27.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself JESUS surrounded by His disciples at a certain spot in Capernaum, and an immense crowd of people coming to Him.

2 Prelude—Grant me, O GOD, such understanding, that I may discover by the light of Thy HOLY SPIRIT how infinitely precious is the divine food of the Holy Eucharist, and make me fully know with what faithfulness I ought to serve Thee in order to partake of It worthily.

I Point—The great excellency of the Holy Eucharist.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Our adorable Master, desiring to teach the people the deep mysteries contained in the Sacrament of love which He was soon to institute, commences by creating within them a desire, that their hearts might be so prepared, that their minds should receive these sublime truths without difficulty. He speaks to them of that food which shall endure to eternal life. We know what this sacred Food is; it is the adorable Eucharist, the infinite gift of a SAVIOUR'S love, which is really and in truth His Own Body and Blood, His soul and His divinity, present under the forms of bread and wine. Consider with what admiration the consideration of this great mystery should fill us, with what gratitude and love towards our adorable LORD. He says: "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed."[1] The SON of

[1] St. John vi. 55.

GOD willed to communicate Himself to our souls; He became Man for our salvation, and was destined to be the great Sacrifice which was to open to us the gates of heaven; He willed that the fruits of His incarnation and death should be fully applied to each one of us; He willed that we, set free by His Blood from the death of sin, should "live by Him:"[1] and in order to communicate to us His life, He has chosen before all other means that which most effectually proves to us His love, a means which passeth all understanding: for He our GOD makes Himself the Food of our souls. In order to know the value of so great a Gift, and the love of Him Who makes It, it is necessary to comprehend Who GOD is, and what we are. Mystery above all mysteries! JESUS CHRIST has said: "Is not the life more than meat?"[2] As to this mystery we should assuredly say: "The meat is infinitely more than the life." But since in all our LORD'S actions the end is always worthy of the means, we may be certain that He would not have given men this heavenly Food if the life which It conveys was not in His eyes of a like value, in very truth Himself in us. What dignity then has He not conferred upon our souls! How intimate is the converse which they ought to have with GOD! How blessed are they in being so tenderly cared for by GOD! And how anxious should we be to be worthy of such a Presence, of so much love!

II Point—The necessary conditions for receiving the Holy Eucharist worthily.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." The Jews, touched by these words, said to JESUS: "What shall we do that we might work the works of GOD?"[3] Like them, let us pray to our divine SAVIOUR to show us how we ought to prepare ourselves to

[1] St. John vi. 57. [2] St. Matth. vi. 25. [3] St. John vi. 28.

receive this precious Food worthily; listen to the answer that He deigns to give us: "This is the work of GOD, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent."[1] Practical faith then is the principal virtue which those who have the happiness of being communicants should seek to acquire; this it is which developes in our souls the precious fruits of this adorable Sacrament, by enabling us to practise all the virtues of which it is the source. It is of little use to receive JESUS CHRIST within us, if we neglect to co-operate with the precious graces that He sheds so abundantly upon us: and this co-operation is on our part nothing else than the spirit of faith, by which we can raise ourselves above our natural inclinations to evil, and the evil ways of the world, so as to do all that faith bids us, and seek nothing but what she promises. It is by the spirit of faith that we are taught to judge of matters as JESUS CHRIST judges of them, to love what He loves, and to hate what He hates, to follow His example; if we were filled with it, we should glory in belonging to God, and all other things would seem to us in comparison nought but vanity; we should then seek more ardently for the treasures of heaven than the partisans of the world pursue those empty vanities which lead them astray; we should love JESUS with such fervour that we should receive joys and sorrows from His hands with equal thankfulness. O my SAVIOUR, what shame and confusion ought I to feel, since I find myself so different from what I ought to be, although I have so often received the Holy Communion! And yet Thou still willest that I should not cease to hope in Thee. I hope then in Thee, O infinite Goodness, and with my whole heart I will strive, by the aid of Thy grace, to derive all the benefit that I ought from this great Sacrament of Thy love.

Colloquy.—Thank your LORD JESUS CHRIST with much

[1] St. John vi. 29.

love for the inestimable gift of Himself which He has given us in the Holy Eucharist. Ask of Him grace to enable you always to partake worthily of this adorable Sacrament. Pray Him to pardon you the negligences which have hindered you from profiting by it as you ought. Make several acts of love and contrition at His feet. Lay before Him all the needs of your soul with much confidence in His willingness to help you.

Resolution—I will do all my actions to-day in the spirit of faith, with the intention of preparing to receive the Holy Eucharist.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." *St. John* vi. 27.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCI Meditation

THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

"JESUS said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thrist." *St. John* vi. 35.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Imagine that you are with the disciples following JESUS, and that you are listening to His sacred words: an immense crowd surrounds our divine Master.

2 Prelude—O LORD JESUS, Who art the Life and Joy of my soul, deign to show me and make me taste how sweet Thou art, so that, being wholly satisfied with Thy love, all else on earth may be distasteful and unsatisfying to my soul.

I Point—JESUS is the Bread of life in the Holy Eucharist. All is love in the divine mystery of the Eucharist; JESUS CHRIST Himself becomes therein our Bread, the living Bread, the fruitful source of that life which He gives us. It is not the same with this sacred Bread as it is with our natural food; the latter is assimilated by our nature, and ennobled by being incorporated into our substance; the Bread of the Eucharist incorporates us into JESUS CHRIST, making us more and more His members, and giving us life in Him in so perfect a manner, that, after receiving the Holy Communion, we can say with St. Paul: "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me."[1] By virtue of this divine life our souls are preserved from the death of sin. Our LORD says, speaking to the Jews: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."[2] I am assured, then, that this Blessed Sacrament will keep me from committing sin, unless I myself wilfully give way to temptation; what a blessed assurance! This Sacrament of life extends its precious effects even to our bodies, it places in our very flesh the germ of the resurrection which shall be developed at the last day, and will then put us in possession of an eternal and glorious life: "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."[3] How infinitely precious then is the gift of the Holy Eucharist! It needed all the wisdom of GOD to devise it, and the love of GOD to give it to men. O LORD JESUS, grant that I may never show such ingratitude towards

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] St. John vi. 49. [3] St. John vi. 54.

Thee as not to recognise Thy great goodness towards us, or be such an enemy to myself as not to profit by it.

II Point—JESUS fills and satisfies the soul with His sweetness in this Holy Sacrament.

"I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." JESUS, the true Bread from heaven, contains within Himself, as the church says, all manner of delights. GOD made Man contains under the Eucharistic veils all His adorable perfections, and the infinite sweetness which will be the joy for ever of the saints in heaven. Our dear LORD does not ordinarily make known to the souls of those who receive Him all the treasures of His divinity, in order to leave them an opportunity of practising faith and other virtues in a surer and more disinterested way; but as one cannot approach a great fire without at least getting some warmth from it, as the fountain of eternal delights cannot be so closed as not to allow some drops to fall from it, so do souls who are well prepared find in the Holy Communion a pleasure so pure and so perfect, that it gives them nothing but contempt and disgust for the pleasures of the world and earthly enjoyments. This heavenly Food exterminates all evil desires and lusts, inspires the soul with pure affections and virtuous desires, and thus accomplishes in her the promise of JESUS CHRIST: "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." If the vanities of the world still attack me, if I am still led away by that which flatters me and ministers to my self-love, it is because I have not as yet sufficiently tasted the sweetness of the Holy Eucharist, or having tasted It, have lost the remembrance of It. What then shall I do, O my GOD? I will go to Thy altar with good dispositions, and I will strive to become worthy to have my share in the delights which Thou bestowest on pure souls.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST with all the love you can. Make acts of faith in the effects which the Holy Eucharist produces in souls well prepared to receive It. Humble yourself deeply for the little good that you have hitherto derived from that Blessed Sacrament. Pray JESUS with great confidence to give you His grace, in order to make up for the time that you have lost. Make some practical resolutions before Him.

Resolution—Make to-day frequent acts of mortification with the view of preparing yourself for the Holy Communion.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"I am that Bread of Life." *St. John* vi. 48. JESUS, our Way and our Life, have pity upon us.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCII Meditation

THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living FATHER hath sent Me, and I live by the FATHER: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." *St. John* vi. 56, 57.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine yourself in the company of the disciples following JESUS, and listening to His sacred words: a great crowd of people surround Him.

2 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, Who art the life and the joy of my soul, do Thou deign to show me and make me taste of Thy sweetness, so that, being wholly satisfied with Thy love, all else upon earth may be distasteful and unsatisfying to my soul.

I **Point**—The Holy Communion unites us to JESUS.

"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." In giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion, our adorable SAVIOUR does not merely come to us to pass through our hearts; but He comes to dwell in them, and He continues to abide in them if we carefully cherish within us the fruits of His adorable Sacrament. A heart which has received JESUS, and remains united to Him by recollectedness and faithfulness, is a living temple in which He abides with love and delight, with which He holds sweet converse, and upon which He showers His blessings, making it burn more and more with the sacred fire of His love. The divine Master, speaking to His disciples, said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."[1] When we have received the Holy Communion, we are united so closely to Him, that we live by His life; it is He Who implants within us those virtues of which we produce the acts, just as the sap of a tree rising in the branches causes it to bring forth fruit. O that we could realise how close are the ties which then bind us to JESUS, making us one with Him! There is no earthly union which can give a just idea of this: but yet our adorable Master disdains not to call our souls His spouse and Himself our Husband. O my Divine SAVIOUR! with what reverence, with what love, with what holy joy, ought not my soul to be penetrated as the moment approaches which shall make this holy union still closer! O adorable JESUS, Sovereign Good of pure souls, it is in Thee alone that we can find rest, and peace and happiness.

[1] St. John xv. 5.

Break the bands, I pray Thee, which bind me to the world and to my own self, that I may unite myself to Thee, never to be separated either in time or eternity.

II Point—The Holy Communion ought to make us conform our lives on the pattern of JESUS CHRIST.

"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him." Why does JESUS give us, under mystical veils, in this place of our pilgrimage, the very same blessings which will constitute our glory and happiness in heaven? Why does He come to dwell within us, never to leave us, unless we wilfully drive Him out? It is that He may apply to us the fruits of His incarnation and death in all their fulness. He has accomplished all these mysteries of love and pity, for no other reason than that we may be made more and more like Him, by being united to His merits and imitating His virtues. He wills that every Christian should glorify His FATHER as He has glorified Him. This is why He, as it were, reproduces Himself in them, to render them true worshippers of the FATHER in spirit and in truth. Consider this well: JESUS CHRIST wills that those who receive Him at His Holy Table, should continually strive to put off the old man and to put on the new. To go on living a lukewarm life when we have the happiness of frequent communions is to put an obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of His desires and to thwart His intentions. O LORD JESUS, how could I cause Thee such pain as this? I desire to make a firm and unchangeable resolution. I will not neglect anything so that I may advance in the acquisition of virtue, happy in acknowledging by such actions Thy infinite goodness, which has caused Thee to institute this Sacrament of love.

Colloquy—Make from your inmost heart all the acts of adoration, love, and thankfulness which are due to your LORD

JESUS CHRIST by reason of His many titles. Ask Him to give you those holy desires for receiving the Holy Communion which are so pleasing to Him, and which so well prepare the soul to receive Him worthily. Humble yourself in His holy presence because this desire is so faint within your heart, and inspires you with so little resolution to overcome your evil inclinations. Pray Him to light the flame of His love within you. Give yourself up wholly to Him.

Resolution—I will fight bravely against my besetting sin, in order to prepare my soul to receive the Holy Communion.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him." *St. John* vi. 56. "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." *Gal.* ii. 20.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCIII Meditation

THE NECESSITY OF RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION

"JESUS said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." *St. John* vi. 53.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself JESUS surrounded by a

great crowd, who are listening to Him, and take your place amongst His disciples.

2 Prelude—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, to be deeply impressed by the warnings which Thou pronouncest against those who will not come near Thy holy Table, so that, if my love towards Thee became so weak as not to draw me there, the fear of offending Thee might at least hinder me from keeping entirely away.

I Point—JESUS wills that we should receive Him in the Holy Communion.

Our Blessed LORD has so great a desire to communicate Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, that He uses every means to make us partake of it. To the most urgent invitations He joins the greatest promises; but His love, still fearing that we might resist Him, goes so far as to use threats, pronouncing against those who obstinately reject His tender advances, these terrible words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." Realise, so far as you can, what a cause for sorrow it must be to our dear LORD to behold the blameworthy indifference of so many souls who have nought but distaste for the Holy Eucharist. Realise the still more bitter pain that He suffers through the ingratitude of those whom He has prevented with His especial grace, and who, having learnt the necessity of receiving It often, yet absent themselves from the Blessed Sacrament because they refuse to make the sacrifices His love asks of them in order to partake of It. The author of the "Imitation of CHRIST" says: "Alas, some persons, lukewarm and undisciplined, do willingly delay confession, and defer Holy Communion, lest they should be obliged to keep a stricter watch over themselves. O how poor and mean is their love, how weak their devotion, who so easily put off Holy Communion!" Our divine Master is deeply grieved; He desires to find rest for Himself in intimate union with His elect.

Listen to the words that He speaks to you, as He did to His apostles, when very many of His disciples, stumbling at the deep mysteries of the Eucharist that He was declaring to the people, left Him, and would not follow Him any more: "Will ye also go away?"[1] O LORD JESUS, the chief of Thy apostles teaches me the answer that I should make, and with all my heart I say it after Him: "LORD, to whom shall I go, Thou hast the words of eternal life; and I believe and am sure, that Thou art that CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD."[2] O LORD JESUS, my only life, if so many ungrateful hearts refuse to receive Thee, ought it not to be my joy and duty to make such reparation as I may be able for all the outrages done to Thy love and tenderness, by the intensity and ardour of my love, the purity of my worship, and above all the frequent partaking of Thy Blessed Sacrament?

II Point—JESUS desires that we should profit by the Holy Communion.

Our divine SAVIOUR calls us to His table; but He desires that we should come with good dispositions, and that we should make the best use of the great blessings which are offered to us there. The fruit which the Holy Communion ought to produce is to unite us to the mind of CHRIST, conforming us perfectly to Him in thought, feeling, affections and will. A soul that often receives JESUS CHRIST, but does not labour to produce Him in her works by a life conformed to His example and His doctrine, does not fulfil the end which our divine SAVIOUR proposed when He instituted the Sacrament of union and love. O my SAVIOUR, too often have I imitated those imperfect souls? Am I faithful in straightway striving to overcome my evil inclinations after I have been to Thine altar, and received Thee into myself, that I may follow the leading of Thy HOLY SPIRIT? O my divine Master, have mercy upon me,

[1] St. John vi. 67. [2] St. John vi. 68, 69.

against Thee have I sinned, and to Thee I have recourse for strength to raise myself, and to be preserved from falling again: help me and succour me, O infinite Goodness; I promise Thee for the future not to neglect anything in my power so that I may derive spiritual good from Thy holy Sacrament.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as the one only source of life to our souls. Thank Him for the love which He deigns to show us by pressing us with all sorts of motives to feed on His adorable Sacrament. Make Him earnest acts of reparation for the ingratitude that He receives, and pray Him to pardon your own unfaithfulness. Ask for grace to profit fully for the future from partaking of the Holy Eucharist.

Resolution—I will zealously apply myself to practise every Christian virtue, especially the one I need the most, in order to profit by my Communions.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"LORD, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." *St. John* vi. 68.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCIV Contemplation

THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYRO-PHŒNICIAN WOMAN

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"Then JESUS went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan

came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O LORD, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. . . . Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, LORD, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, LORD: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then JESUS answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." *St. Matth.* xv. 21-28.

2 **Prelude**—Imagine a street through which JESUS is passing accompanied by His apostles, when the woman of Canaan begins to follow Him, and then the house into which He enters where she casts herself at His feet.

3 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O LORD JESUS, to understand rightly what Thou feelest towards those who pray to Thee, and what feelings Thou requirest of them in return.

I **Point**—Consider the persons.

Behold our LORD JESUS CHRIST, full of mercy and goodness, dignified and meek in His bearing, and infinitely full of love. He is accompanied by His disciples. The woman of Canaan follows Him with confidence, her whole bearing is that of a suppliant, the earnestness of her prayer is shown by all her movements. Is our fervour when we pray to our LORD to give us any grace to be compared to hers? We do not, it is true, see Him before us as she saw Him, but we know that He is really present as GOD and Man in the Blessed Sacrament; do we know how to employ the precious moments that we pass before Him when He is present on the altar?

II and III **Points**—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Hear the woman's cry: "Have mercy on me, O LORD, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil: But He answered her not a word." Why, O good LORD, dost Thou so reject her petition? JESUS does not reject her, He secretly increases her confidence in prayer; but He wills that she should persevere in prayer, that her reward may be increased, and that she might for ever after be a model of persevering prayer. The poor mother is not repelled; she addresses the apostles; and they, approaching their divine Master, say to Him: "LORD, send her away, for she crieth after us." But He answered and said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And this woman was a Gentile. He had hardly spoken these words when she came a second time, kneeling down at His feet; nothing wavering in the confidence that she had in His power and goodness, she cried out: "LORD, help me." The heart of JESUS is touched; He speaks at last to the woman. But does He then take away from her every hope? Never before has He spoken such hard words: "It is not meet," He said, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Was not this enough to dismay, even to annihilate, the most ardent hope? But if we know JESUS, and what we ourselves are, what is there that He cannot do? This woman is suddenly enlightened as to her true state; our LORD had described it forcibly as that of a dog, but what does this matter, for the heart of JESUS towards her is that of a father. He speaks to her as to a child. She even finds in her condition a powerful reason for using to her advantage the sort of reproach which JESUS CHRIST addressed to her. She said: "Truth, LORD, but yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Dwell on the ways in which this woman made herself so acceptable to her LORD, her way of approaching Him which made her prayer so irresistible, the place where she came to meet Him, the name of "crumbs" which she gave to the

grace she hoped for, and we can form some idea of the low estimation in which she held herself, of the way in which she looked up to JESUS CHRIST, of the fulness of her confidence, and of the necessity which, so to speak, she laid upon her LORD to listen to her supplication. We shall then be less astonished at the gracious words of commendation which our LORD at length bestowed upon her: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." O LORD JESUS, it is thus Thou teachest me to pray with confidence, hoping against hope, with such importunity, that it may be impossible for Thee to refuse my prayer.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST with lively faith and sincere humility as the sovereign Giver of all heavenly gifts. Acknowledge that you are altogether unworthy to obtain the least of His gifts. Nevertheless, pray for those which you need most, especially the gifts of the spirit of prayer and humility, making use of such words as fell from the woman of Canaan in order that you likewise may be heard.

Resolution—I will say all my prayers to-day with much faith, humility, and confidence.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—O LORD JESUS, Fount of goodness, have pity upon me.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCV Contemplation

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN WHO HAD AN IMPEDIMENT IN HIS SPEECH

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—"And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." *St. Mark* vii. 31-35.

2 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself a road; see JESUS walking on it; a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech is brought to Him.

3 **Prelude**—O LORD JESUS, my soul is often deaf and slow to hear those things which concern my salvation, neither does it pray to Thee as it ought: vouchsafe then of Thine infinite mercy to deliver me from these infirmities.

I **Point**—Consider the persons.

Behold our divine LORD surrounded by His disciples: consider for a moment the sweetness, the holiness, the dignified majesty that accompanies all His movements. What happiness for us if He should deign to impress His sacred character upon our minds and hearts in a way in which it cannot be effaced. Consider the man they bring to JESUS; he is deaf, and has an

impediment in his speech; his miserable condition cannot fail to excite the pity of our good Master. In the same way bring before Him the infirmities of your soul, and He will be equally moved to compassionate them.

II and III Points—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

JESUS takes the deaf man by the hand whom the people had brought to Him, and leads him aside. Follow Him in your mind, and meditate on what He is about to do. He puts His fingers into his ears, He spits and touches his tongue. O my LORD, apply in the same way to my soul the remedies that Thou knowest to be needful for it. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed in the fervour of prayer, on account of the depth of His compassion towards our miseries. Then, after He had prayed as Man, He speaks as GOD, saying, with authority: "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened;" and straightway the miracle was performed: "His ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Let me beseech my LORD to look with mercy on the infirmities of my soul: it is deaf; for ofttimes the words of salvation are addressed to it without its comprehending them. Very often the sweet voice of its LORD makes itself heard within my soul, and it is dumb, not knowing how to speak to GOD in prayer or how to speak to others of GOD. JESUS sees all this, and still He loves us. We are the price of His blood: He Himself invites us to ask His help. Let us then ask of Him with confidence and fervour to heal all our infirmities, to remedy all our miseries. Our LORD forbids those who saw the miracle to speak of it to any one, but the more He forbids it the more are they filled with wonder, and publish His power and glory. They say: "He hath done all things well, He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."[1] If I were truly faithful to JESUS, so

[1] St. Matth. vii. 37.

that He might work in me all that He desires, He would be glorified; for the angels in heaven and His true servants on earth would praise Him for the wonders that His grace has worked in me.

Colloquy—Pay your LORD JESUS CHRIST your homage of adoration and love, and magnify His Name for the miracles His grace works daily in the souls which respond to His call. Humble yourself before Him for having profited so little by His longing desire to heal all your infirmities. Speak to Him with confidence of all the needs of your soul, praying Him to help you and to be glorified in you.

Resolution—I will to-day often lift up my heart to JESUS, and entreat Him to heal all my spiritual infirmities. I will try to be recollected and faithful to His grace, that I may correspond with His work in my soul.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." *St. Luke* v. 12.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCVI Meditation

JESUS DESIRES THAT IT SHOULD BE KNOWN WHO HE IS

"When JESUS came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and

others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD." *St. Matth.* xvi. 13-16.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Imagine a town into which our divine Master is about to enter with His disciples.

2 Prelude—Grant me grace, O LORD JESUS, to know Thee, to unite myself to Thee with my whole heart, and to have a portion of those graces with which Thou rewardest all who have a living practical faith in Thee.

I Point—St. Peter acknowledges JESUS to be the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD.

"JESUS asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Our Blessed LORD knew perfectly what men thought and said of Him; His object in asking this question of His apostles was not to instruct them, but to fix their attention upon a subject so important, and to arrive at the further question: "But whom say ye that I am?" What feelings must not this question have aroused in the hearts of the apostles? What should we have felt had we been in their place? St. Peter, answering for all, exclaimed: "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD." Reverence, faith, and love drew this confession from him, and if the dispositions of our hearts towards JESUS are like his, the same feelings should be awakened in us. Try then to realise the meaning of these words of St. Peter by repeating them in your inmost heart. "Yes, LORD, Thou art the CHRIST, it is Thou Whom GOD the FATHER has consecrated King and Priest from all eternity, to offer to Him an acceptable and worthy sacrifice, and to reign for ever over His holy kingdom. I believe that Thou art the SON of the living GOD; Thou art GOD, equal to the FATHER;

Thou art hidden, it is true, beneath the veil of Thy sacred humanity, but I know and believe that Thou art GOD." After making such acts as these, consider how worthy the SON of GOD, our sovereign Master, is of our regard; but try especially to kindle in your heart great love towards Him by meditating on His titles of SAVIOUR and CHRIST.

II Point—JESUS rewards St. Peter's faith.

"JESUS answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My FATHER Which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." Two subjects are suggested for our reflection by these words. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My FATHER Which is in heaven." JESUS CHRIST reminds us that faith is the gift of GOD: a gratuitous gift, which we cannot merit, but with which we can co-operate, and which His infinite goodness will perfect in us according as we correspond to it. How grateful ought we to be to our LORD for this precious gift, and how careful ought we to be to labour to increase it day by day! Our LORD says to Peter: "Blessed art thou;" and this is as much as to say that faith, when it is living and practical, assures our happiness in this life and in that which is to come. The continuation of our LORD'S reply proves to us His bounteous goodness, in recompensing those who co-operate with His grace. "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." St. Peter confesses the divinity of our LORD, and his faith is instantly rewarded. He is raised to a high position in the church, and much grace is given him to enable him to fulfil the work intrusted to him. Thus does our LORD love to repay the faithfulness of His servants. Try to realise the blessedness of being His, and how needful it is for our true interest that we should correspond faithfully to His grace.

Colloquy—Confess with St. Peter that your LORD is truly the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and adore Him with the deepest reverence and the tenderest love. Thank Him for the precious gift of faith which He has granted you without any merit of yours. If your conscience reproaches you for not having profited as you ought by this precious gift, humble yourself on account of your conduct, and ask for pardon. Beseech Him to quicken your faith, and to make you worthy of receiving His divine rewards.

Resolution—I will try to do everything to-day in the spirit of a living faith, especially those things which directly appertain to the service of God.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"I believe, O LORD JESUS, that Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD." *St. Matth.* xvi. 15.

Prayer—Anima Christi.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCVII Meditation

JESUS FOUNDS HIS CHURCH

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." *St. Matth.* xvi. 18, 19.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself the town into which our LORD is about to enter with His disciples.

2 **Prelude**—Make me, O LORD, appreciate as I ought the favour that Thou hast shown me in making me a child of Thy church, and vouchsafe to keep me ever in her fold.

I **Point**—The Church of CHRIST is infallible.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We live in an age in which there is much carelessness and indifference about religion, and great disregard and dislike for dogma; many in matters of doctrine follow their own devices, attach themselves to false teachers, and become unbelievers. In the midst of all these dangers there is but one safe way, and that is to cling closely to the church. What gratitude is not due to GOD, for having caused us to be born in the bosom of the church, for having taught us from our childhood her holy truths, and bestowed upon us all the blessings which are intrusted to her keeping. Bless and praise GOD for all these benefits, and say from the bottom of your heart: "O my GOD, I firmly believe all that the church teaches me to be the truth, because Thou the eternal Truth hast taught it her, and hast made her infallible; I firmly believe, that if I do all that she tells me from Thee I shall be more assured of reaching heaven than if an angel from heaven had showed me the way." Let us pray earnestly to our LORD that He will strengthen in us these right feelings, and that He will give us grace to live as worthy children of the church, who like a tender mother is grieved at the loss of those souls which imperil their salvation. Do your best by faithfulness and zeal to work for the conversion of sinners.

II **Point**—The Church of CHRIST is founded on the apostles.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."[1] While meditating upon these words spoken to St. Peter, and to the college of the apostles, we should reverence the office of a bishop, who is a successor of the apostles, who, like one of them, is one of the foundation-stones of the church, and who is an inheritor of their powers. The apostolic succession is the centre of catholic unity; the hearts of all true Christians should cling to it, and it will be to them a safeguard against all impiety and heresy. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST says: "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."[2] He teaches us by these words that in troublous times, when He permits His church to be sorely tried, the faithful, represented by the eagles, must gather round their bishops, for the body can only be where the head is found, and the church can be built on no other foundation than that which JESUS CHRIST Himself has laid. O my adorable SAVIOUR! I am a child of Thy true church, of the holy, catholic and apostolic church; I believe firmly that she is the pillar and ground of the truth. Draw closer and closer the bonds which unite me to her. Holy church, founded upon the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief Corner-Stone, if I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning! In life I will glory in belonging to her; in death it will be my joy to say; I believe in the one holy, catholic and apostolic church, and I die in her communion and as her child.

Colloquy—Adore your LORD JESUS CHRIST as being the SON of GOD. Make Him acts of gratitude and thanksgiving for founding His church on earth and giving her the promise that He will be always with her. Renew your promises of attachment to holy church. Pray JESUS very earnestly never to

[1] St. Matth. xvi. 18, 19. [2] St. Luke xvii. 37.

suffer your love for the church to be diminished by the gainsaying of the wicked, or the evil suggestions of the devil.

Resolution—I will make several acts of faith and devotion during the day concerning the grace given within the holy church. I will pray for the conversion of all sinners, as well as infidels and heretics.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—I desire to live and die in the bosom of the church, my mother. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." *St. Matth.* xvi. 18.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCVIII Meditation

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH OUGHT TO RULE OUR CONDUCT

"From that time forth began JESUS to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, LORD: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of GOD, but those that be of men." *St. Matth.* xvi. 21-23.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 Prelude—Picture to yourself our LORD walking in the midst of His disciples, and the multitude following Him.

2 **Prelude**—Give me, O LORD, a lively faith to enable me to judge of all things according to Thy divine mind, and to set aside and despise all natural inclinations when my eternal interests are concerned.

I **Point**—We ought to be conformed to the mind of JESUS CHRIST.

"Thou savourest not the things that be of GOD, but those that be of men." Then in general look upon humiliations and suffering as the greatest of all evils, and strive to ward them off from their friends; if they do not succeed they enervate their strength by showing overmuch pity for them; but those who have the mind of GOD take higher views, they look at the precious advantages which usually follow trials, and though tenderly compassionating those whom they see suffer, and employing every possible means to alleviate their sufferings, they do not enervate them by ill-timed tenderness or try to turn them from the holy path to Calvary, because they long above all for the glory of GOD and the salvation of those they love. O LORD JESUS, fill me with Thy spirit: the world calls hardness that holy firmness which Thy grace inspires; but the world condemns that which it does not understand; it knows not Thy sweetness and tenderness, and that of Thy true friends; it has not seen Thee weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, nor has it contemplated Thy blessed Mother at the foot of Thy Cross. I who have so often meditated on these mysteries of Thy love ought to look on them very differently to what the world does; grant that I may do so. Grant that knowing so well the extent of those sufferings which Thy love endured, I may be enabled to receive with resignation, and even to rejoice in the tribulations by which it pleases Thee to lead me, and those who are dear to me, to the eternal happiness promised to those whose lives on earth shall have been conformed to Thine.

II Point—We ought to bear our cross after JESUS.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."[1] Who is He Who speaks these words, and what does He expect from us? They are the words of JESUS, our Guide and our Light! He Who has said of Himself: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."[2] It is JESUS, the well-beloved SON of the FATHER, our SAVIOUR, our Shepherd and our divine Head; "Whose yoke is easy and Whose burden is light,"[3] when it is borne with love. And what does He expect from us? To follow Him in the holy way of the Cross. Why, O my divine Master, is this word "Cross" so repugnant to me? Has not that sacred Wood sweetened for Thy friends the bitter waters of tribulation? And is not the Cross the consolation and the treasure of all Thy true disciples? O Cross of my SAVIOUR, dyed with Thy adorable Blood! O holy Cross, which at the last day will appear to me radiant with glory! O sacred Tree, which has borne the price of My redemption, pledge of all my hope, emblem of the love of my GOD, I welcome Thee, and will never more be separated from Thee. O Cross of JESUS CHRIST! thou art, and will for ever be precious to me, since it is only in bearing thee that I can follow in my SAVIOUR'S steps, and at last arrive at that eternal happiness which He has won for me by dying upon thee.

Colloquy—Offer to your LORD JESUS CHRIST the homage of your adoration and love. Beseech Him to fill you with His Spirit, and to make known to you how great was the suffering that He endured for you. Humble yourself at His feet for having hitherto borne your cross with so little courage. Accept from Him all that His love orders for thee, and offer to bear it all cheerfully. Pray Him to choose thy cross for thee and to bear it with thee.

[1] St. Matth. xvi. 24. [2] St. John xiv. 6. [3] St. Matth. xi. 30.

Resolution—I will try to accept willingly all that is painful that may happen to me to-day.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." *St. Matth.* viii. 19.

Prayer—Prayer of St. Ignatius.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

XCIX Meditation

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *St. Mark* viii. 35-37.

Preparatory Prayer.

1 **Prelude**—Picture to yourself our LORD walking surrounded by His disciples, followed by a crowd of people.

2 **Prelude**—Give me grace, O LORD, to work out my own salvation at any sacrifice and at all cost.

I **Point**—The loss of salvation is the greatest of all losses. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" GOD has not made us to remain on this earth for ever; this life is but a time of trial, which will shortly come to an end; placed between an eternity of happiness and an eternity of torment, every one is forced to choose between the one and the other, for there is nothing between

these two extremes. I have made my choice; but what misery is it, if neglecting to take efficacious means to arrive at that blessed end which ought never to be lost sight of by me, I should after all fail in the one great and important business of my salvation! O LORD JESUS, suffer it not to be so; fill me with a holy fear which shall lead me to watch and pray unceasingly, lest I be taken unawares. What are all earthly interests in comparison with those of eternity? What matters it whether the world approves or disapproves of me, whether I enjoy the sweets of life, the riches and honours which the world has to bestow, or am deprived of them? What matters it whether I am ill or in good health, in sorrow or in joy, if only I am at last among the blessed? My life is passing away, the end of it will come soon, and then what good would it be to me to possess the whole world if I lose my soul? O my good Master, it is not Thy will that I should do so. Thou placest within my reach every means of gaining heaven; Thou drawest me to Thee that I may find in Thee a shelter from mine enemies; grant that I may be faithful to Thy love for me, and that through my works I may be found worthy to receive my heavenly inheritance.

II Point—The loss of salvation is irreparable.

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The losses that we meet with in this life may be partially repaired, but not so the loss of eternal salvation; this, when once forfeited, can never be recovered. "Where the tree falls, there must it lie." What terrible words, which have ever made saints fear and tremble. It is certain that there will come a time when my lot in eternity will be irrevocably fixed. Shall I then inherit heaven or shall I be cast down to hell? I know not; all I know is that when once that moment which is to fix my eternal destiny is passed, no more time will be granted me, nor any means of being delivered from

that fearful abyss of woe, if I should fall into it; nor will there be any danger of losing heaven if I should attain that bliss. O my GOD! implant within me these great and important truths; make me willing to sacrifice everything rather than risk my eternal salvation. I have but one soul, I must save it cost me what it may.

Colloquy—Thank your LORD JESUS CHRIST for giving you grace to meditate on the importance of salvation, and for giving you the time and the means of saving your soul. If you have incurred His displeasure at any time, bless Him and thank Him for not having taken you out of the world at that moment. Make firm and generous resolutions. Pray Him never to permit you to be unfaithful to Him.

Resolution—I will generously overcome any repugnance I may feel in fulfilling my duties with exactness.

Offer the Resolution.

Spiritual Reflection—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" *St. Mark* viii. 36.

Prayer—Our FATHER.

Self-Examination on the Meditation.

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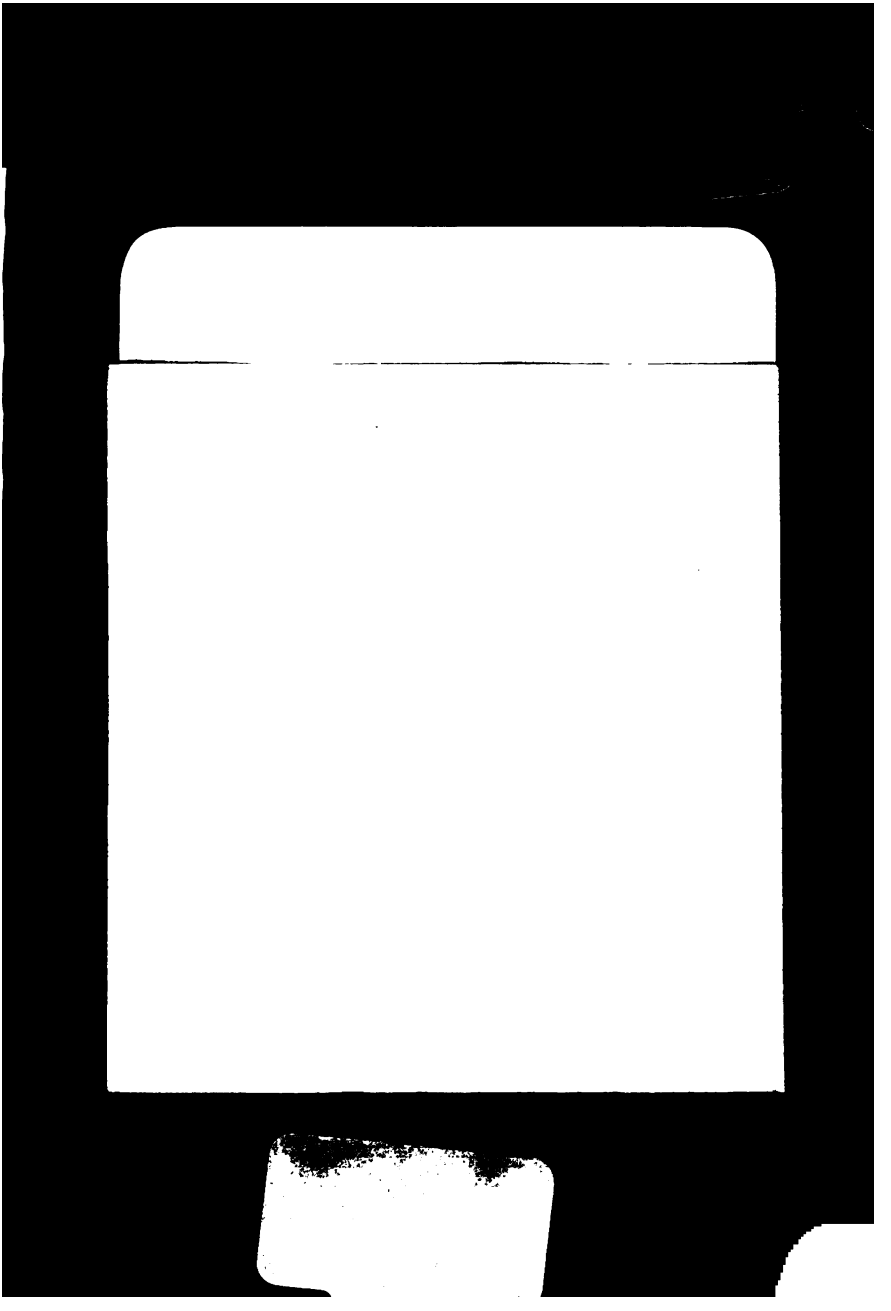
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